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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1900.

My Lady of Orange

By H. C. BAILEY.

CHAPTER I.

AN AUDIENCE OF ORANGE.

NO saint am I: nay that is true enough, else had I scarce done my work in the world and lived to sit here at sixty by my own fireside with the children chattering round me and Gabrielle's eyes still looking into mine. 'Tis thirty years ago now, and the joy of my old battles is but a dull memory, and the smoke has rolled away, and the shouts and screams have died into silence; but not yet have we forgotten here in Holland the days when Alva coiled himself like an iron serpent round the land, and castles and towns sank down together amid blood and fire. I am English born and bred, and quarrels of Dutchman and Spaniard were no work of mine, yet something a man must do in the world, and this was the work that came to my hand: to fight Alva with his own two weapons—the sword and the lie, and with both I beat him, *cordieu!* with both!

At the first I said I was no saint, and that, it may be, is the reason why first I fought for Alva ere my turn came to meet him fairly in the field. I was true to him; save that at the last I left him for William of Nassau, I was ever true to him, and I fought for him as a man may at Mechlin, and Zutphen, and Harlem sack. Nought did we owe to Alva; it was no little he owed us; may not soldiers of fortune choose their leader? Did we not choose well when we chose Orange in Alva's stead? 'Ay,

ay,' you answer, 'choose you may; but your choice should be made once.' Well, 'twas a mistake, I confess, and all men make mistakes at times—else would victories be few.

Mistake or no mistake, it was ended, and I, John Newstead, rode into Delft, to William of Nassau:

'An Englishman asks audience of the Prince!'

'Ay, ay, English ye call yourself, Spaniard ye look,' grumbled the serving man. I caught him by the collar:

'*Cordieu!* I a Spaniard, knave? I, John Newstead? 's wounds! *Madre Dios!* Do I look a Spaniard?' I cried, raising my whip.

'Well, ye swear like one,' he answered, and the knave wriggled away.

A moment later I was standing in an inner room, fronting the man who had set himself alone to meet the power of Spain, the man who held out still though all his country lay in the hollow of Alva's hand. In truth, William of Nassau was a man. He sat there behind a table, with a fellow at his elbow who eyed me askance as I entered, and whispered low in his master's ear. The Prince did not answer; his steady dark eyes sought mine, and he sat with his fingers drumming on the table watching me.

'Nay, you look not like an assassin,' he said quietly.

'I will cut his heart out who says it!' I cried.

'And so prove his words,' said the secretary.

'Enough, Cornput. Your name and your purpose, my friend?'

'My name is John Newstead. I come to take service under your Highness.'

'Your name tells me nothing,' the Prince answered.

'I have three hundred stout soldiers outside the town.'

'Ah! What say you, Cornput?'

'Three hundred? Ay; stout, ay, I doubt it not. How many loyal?' said the secretary.

'Each as loyal as myself!' I answered.

'That may well be,' said Cornput, with a sneer. 'Numbers, stoutness, loyalty, all on the surety of their commander. Faith, you value yourself too low.'

'That seems uncommon in Delft,' I said sharply. 'For their numbers, your Highness may count them. For their loyalty, try them. For their stoutness—they fought at Harlem.' Prince and secretary started.

'At Harlem?' said the Prince slowly. 'You are a bold man, my friend.'

'You and your men sacked Harlem under Alva?' cried the secretary.

'I said we were stout soldiers,' I answered. 'There was but one sack of Harlem; we were there.'

'And you come here—here?' stammered the secretary.

'Oh, your questions grow wiser!' I cried.

'Why do you come to me?' asked the Prince. 'Twas not too easy to answer. Why did I leave the winning side for one that never had much to give, and now less than little? I know not even now; it was folly—folly twice told—and the world does not think me a fool.'

'I lead a free company,' I answered; 'no money have my men had for months. They have sworn to fight for Alva no more, and so I lead them to William of Orange. And for myself, *cordieu*! I had rather fight for your Highness than any black Spaniard of them all!' Ay, that, methinks, was my reason; 'tis hard ever to tell why a man's deeds were done. When I think of it, it seems folly, and yet as I spoke the words in the little room at Delft I believed them. Do I believe them now? Well, perhaps. Gabrielle does.'

I saw his eyes brighten as I spoke, and even the sneering secretary looked at me with more favour.

'You choose a cause that can give little—and needs much, my friend,' said the Prince.

'And I can do much and ask little,' I answered.

'And your men?' asked the secretary. It was a home thrust: my men had revolted—deserted—what you will—from Alva because he would not pay them. Were they likely to serve Orange better, who could not?

'My men?' I muttered. '*Madre Dios*, Alva would not give them their wages—well, they shall take them!'

'Three hundred men from fourteen thousand!' said the secretary coolly.

'Oh, the odds are his; I knew that,' I cried, 'I knew that or ever I came to Delft.'

'Spain against the Netherlands? Philip against Orange?' said the Prince dreamily. 'Man against time; iron against God; whose are the odds, my friend?'

I did not answer. I wondered on which side God fought when three thousand men and women were slaughtered at Harlem,

for it needed then a greater man than I to believe God was on the side of Orange. Any knave believes it now.

'Desperate tasks are all I can offer,' said Orange. 'Scant wages if your own efforts fail. Scant wages and desperate tasks.'

'So only they be not impossible,' said I. 'For the wages—Alva!'

'The impossible God does every day,' he answered. 'You have come to me when the clouds are very black, sir. Alva lies before Breuthe: and if Breuthe falls how will you fare?'

I stood silent; if Breuthe fell there was nothing left.

'Will you take the risk?' he said quietly; his steady eyes fixed themselves on me.

'I will take the risk of Alva's worst,' I answered. 'Call it folly if you will, you who never saw William, the first Stadtholder. I was looking into his eyes.'

He smiled.

'Alva lies before Breuthe town; hang on his rear, cut off his convoys, let him never rest. Is that to your liking?'

'I accept,' said I.

The Prince wrote for a moment and gave me a parchment.

'I trust your honour,' he said.

'And I pledge it,' I answered.

And the next morning we rode away from Delft, trusted deserters, three hundred men to fight fourteen thousand. I, John Newstead, captain of lances, came forth to pit myself against Ferdinando of Alva, the greatest soldier in Europe. There was one of us had cause enough to regret my audience of Orange.

CHAPTER II.

THE USE OF A BRIDGE.

'So we have e'en changed masters, captain,' grunted Gaspar Wiederman, my lieutenant, as we jogged along through the woods, in the crisp air of the early morn.

'Well, it can scarce be for the worse,' said I.

'Ach! Who knows?'

'Who knows?' cried Henri Vermeil at my other elbow. 'Why, we all know; we cannot do more than we did for Alva, or worse; and, *ma foi*, we can scarce get less.'

'More defeats, no pay, no plunder. They say the Orange is pious,' grunted Gaspar.

'Well, well; he can pray for your sins, Gaspar,' cried Henri. 'The good man will live on his knees.'

'True, there are the convoys,' said Gaspar. 'Ach! Halt!'

We had come near the road. A few yards below was a mean little inn; further away, the road crested a hill; and, coming quickly over the brow of the hill was a horseman all alone. With two lances, Gaspar and young Vermeil and I rode on towards the road. On and on came our traveller, leaving a trailing cloud of dust behind. At the inn he pulled up, and we heard him cry out for something, but we knew not what. There came out an old crone with a flagon, and he bent from the saddle and raised it to his lips. Just then across the road came a trim, bare-headed girl, and her hair shone in the sunlight. He tossed the flagon back, then, bending to his saddle-bow, he caught the girl in his arms, and drove in his spurs sharply. The horse bounded forward, and he half turned in his saddle towards the screaming inn-woman.

'Alva's men travel free!' he said.

'Ach! so,' grunted Wiederman.

On he came, galloping down the road, while the girl struggled wildly for her strength. He was just passing us when Gaspar looked sharply round at me. I nodded. The thing was done in an instant. He rushed his horse suddenly forward, caught the Spaniard's neck in his arm threw his weight back and his horse on its haunches. Girl and Spaniard fell together.

'Gott! You may travel free, but not far, my friend, not far,' said Gaspar, looking down at him.

The girl had staggered to her feet, but the Spaniard still lay where he had fallen.

'Alas! the fate of incontinence, *mon cher!*' cried Henri Vermeil.

'What was your errand?' I asked in Spanish. The fellow set his teeth, and said nought.

'What was your errand?' I said again. Still he was silent. 'Search him,' I cried to the two that had come with us.

'To Don Guzman d'Astorgas,

'These:

'Press on with all speed, for that the King's service demands you come quickly. The bearer will be your guide.—ALVA.'

Such was the purport of the paper he bore. I read it, and passed it to Gaspar. He shrugged his shoulders.

'He seems anxious, the great Alva,' said he.

'*Sangdiou!* This tells little,' cried Henri Vermeil.

'You think so?' I answered, and fell a-thinking.

'Where is d'Astorgas?' at last I said to the Spaniard. There was no answer.

'You are fond of silence, my kidnapper,' said Gaspar.

'We can gratify you with the opportunity for eternal silence,' Vermeil said with a chuckle.

'I will wait three minutes; then—speak or die,' I said shortly. Ay, I knew he would never speak. Your true Spaniard is hard as iron to others, but—give the devil his due—he is cast in steel himself.

'Will you answer?' He shook his head. I nodded to our two troopers. But the girl ran forward—I think we had all forgotten the girl—and caught my hands.

'No, no,' she cried. 'He must not die.'

'*Gott!* 'tis his own choice,' grunted Gaspar.

'Will you speak?' I asked again.

'I die for the Faith and the King,' he cried; and I signed to the troopers again, and turned away, while the girl hid her face.

'I hope his Faith is a better colour than his King,' grunted Gaspar. The girl looked up.

'You—are you of the Faith?' she cried.

'Oh! perhaps, mademoiselle, perhaps,' said Vermeil.

'Of which Faith?' I asked.

'The Reformed—the Faith of Orange.'

'Ay, ay; our Faith is our master's,' said Gaspar.

'We are in the service of the Prince of Orange,' I said.

'Ah!' she clasped her hands in joy. 'Take me, take me with you.' Vermeil smiled behind his hand.

'*Teufel!* The ways of women!' said Gaspar.

'Take me to the Prince,' she cried again.

'The Prince? Are you mad? You—a girl from an inn?'

The little minx drew herself up with something like a smile.

'Yes, I, a girl from an inn,' she said.

I looked at her, and from her to Gaspar, and from Gaspar to Vermeil. Vermeil nodded.

'You will find I am worth taking,' she said. I eyed her again. Truly, she was a strange maid to come from an inn. Her hands were small and white, and on brow and neck ran the thin lines of blue under the clear white skin. A maid from an inn!

Scarce only that; and so she came with us on her way to the Prince.

‘And now for d’Astorgas,’ said I.

‘We know neither where he is nor what he does; only Alva is in a hurry,’ quoth Gaspar.

‘Not where he is, truly; he brings a convoy, I wager my horse,’ said I. ‘Shall we send him a guide?’

The two looked at me in silence.

‘Seal up the parchment again. One bearer is as good as another. “The bearer will be your guide.”’

Gaspar chuckled.

‘We know not where he is,’ said Vermeil.

‘*Gott!* I could smell a convoy ten miles off,’ cried Gaspar.

‘You will go?’

‘Ay, I will go, and guide him to hell if you will.’

‘Nay, not so far; only to Veermut bridge.’

‘What is the use of a bridge?’

‘Much—when it’s broken,’ said I.

So Gaspar Wiederman mounted and galloped off to smell out Don Guzman, and we rode on towards the bridge of Veermut. By my side rode the girl, sitting her horse like a queen—steed and saddle Henri Vermeil had found her. For a little there was silence. I was pondering how we had best receive Don Guzman, and ever and anon the thought would come across my mind, how would my men ever endure the service of Orange? They had been ready enough to leave Alva. Now it was done, how would they like the change? And I, who cared nought for Alva, cared more than a little for the man I had seen but once—the thin, weary man, with the great dark eyes, at Delft. Suddenly, while I pondered:

‘Why did you kill him?’ asked the girl.

I looked up, startled.

‘So perish all the enemies of the Faith!’ quoth Vermeil.

‘Nay, not without repentance!’ she cried.

‘Repentance!’ said I. ‘A Spaniard repent!’

‘Murder never aided a cause,’ she answered.

‘One cannot make war in white gloves,’ I said, and she answered nothing.

By long and by last we came to Veermut bridge, the narrow old wooden bridge to which belongs the fame and the honour of the first hard blow struck at Alva the invincible. ‘To the bridge?’ you ask. Ay, to the bridge. On one side were Don Guzman

d'Astorgas and Gaspar Wiederman and the convoy ; on the other, Alva and Breunthe town ; and betwixt the two only a few miles of causeway and a river. Well, and we, too.

'Halt !' I cried, and down I sprang to see what the bridge timbers were like.

'Vermeil, take a hundred men, go you a mile or more along the road, let them pass you, hang on their rear, see to it that the guard passes the bridge last. When they are all but over, charge on the rearmost, but do not come on the bridge.'

Vermeil bowed.

'And the others ?' he asked.

'There will be no others, Vermeil.'

It were a long tale to tell : the sun was setting when d'Astorgas and his trusty guide came down the long narrow road with Vermeil hanging like a terrier on their heels. The convoy came on the bridge ; the convoy crossed ; the guard were packed thick between the parapets ; and then suddenly came a flash and the bridge jumped up a little at one end and fell sideways into the stream, with splash and clash and roar and shrieks all mingled, in a thick cloud of smoke. The engineer's is a useful craft. Out from the shelter of a coppice we charged on that hapless, defenceless convoy, and at the end of one wild rush Don Guzman's convoy had changed its owner.

'*Gott !* Alva thrive on our blood, belike we shall thrive on his food,' quoth a gruff voice in my ear.

'Gaspar !'

'Ay, Gaspar, captain. I like a drier road to heaven than a broken bridge.'

'You led him easily ?'

'Like a butcher the sheep ! *Gott !* he asked me how to stave off Vermeil,' cried Gaspar with a laugh.

'Ay, Vermeil is no fool,' I answered.

'No, no fool,' grunted Gaspar shortly. 'No—fool.'

In truth, Vermeil had done well, and he brought his men safely across the river, though by Veermut the current is strong and the banks steep.

'So we cry "check" to Alva !' he shouted gaily.

'Ach ! but not "mate,"' quoth Gaspar.

Cantering down the hill towards us came the girl with the little guard I had left by her riding behind.

'Oh, it was splendid,' she cried while she was still far off, and then, as she came nearer and saw the men that lay bloody and

torn and trampled before her horse's feet, she stopped sharply and wheeled round with a little cry.

'Ach! the ways of women,' quoth Gaspar. 'Now that is how I judge a charge,' and he pointed to the dead beneath him.

'What if she had seen Harlem!' said Vermeil with a smile. Gaspar shrugged his shoulders with a chuckle, and I sat silent looking at her as she walked her horse slowly away, with the troopers chuckling behind her.

'Who moves next, captain, Alva or we?' asked Gaspar. I turned to stare at him.

'*Dieu!* the man is made of iron,' cried Vermeil.

'The man need be iron whom Alva strikes,' said I.

'Ay, when he strikes,' grunted Gaspar.

'How if we strike first?' I asked slowly.

'Ay, ay, that's war,' quoth Gaspar. '*Gott!* that is no training for it, though,' he said sharply, pointing to the convoy. In truth he was right: a swarm of rascals were round a waggon loaded with wine casks, and more than one cask was broached already. I galloped up.

'*Cordieu!* stand back, knaves,' I cried.

'Fair words, captain; the fight's over; here is your health,' quoth one rascal with a mock bow.

'S death! Do I command? Stand back!'

'All in good——,' he began, but the sentence was never ended. It was no time to parley. I reached forward over my horse's neck and fired, and the rascal's blood mixed with the spilt wine on the ground.

'Do I command?' I thundered. 'Ere morning we march. A fair portion of meat and wine to every man, and, *cordieu!* no more. Vermeil, this is work for you.'

Gaspar and I rode back up the hill to settle our plans, and as we passed the girl suddenly she turned her horse towards me.

'Is two murders a day your custom, sir?' she asked.

I did not answer; a woman's scorn is not easy to answer.

'Will you send me to the Prince?' she asked again.

'When I can safely,' said I.

'And till then, sir?'

'Till then you must trust me.'

'Trust—you!' she cried, and her eyes flashed cold, like steel.

CHAPTER III.

THE POSTERN GATE.

THE moon had set and all around us was dark as we broke our bivouac at Veermut and moved through the pinewoods towards Breuthe, with a cloud of skirmishers feeling our way. 'Touch not the cat but the glove,' saith the proverb, and in truth Alva was a mighty cat. Three hundred men were we: four thousand, and Alva himself, lay before Breuthe town, and many more no long journey away. What could we do against them? Yet there lay Alva, and the town was doomed if no help came, and, Breuthe taken, the country lay at his feet. All that was clear enough, and no less clear was it when Gaspar put it bluntly into words as we sat by the camp fire.

'And so nought is possible, think you?' said I at last.

'There is little probable,' quoth Gaspar, 'at Breuthe.'

'Then Orange is lost,' I muttered, half to myself.

'*Teufel!* What would you have?' cried Gaspar, sharply.

Men grow angry before inevitable ill. 'What would you have? We are but men: the odds are his.'

From behind us came a sharp, short, scornful laugh. We both started: it was the girl.

'The odds are his!' she said to herself, and she laughed again. In the firelight I saw Gaspar flush, and I felt the blood rise to my own face; and Gaspar muttered a German oath and wiped his brow. Neither dared meet the other's eyes, for if aught will rouse a man it is a woman who tells him he is a coward.

I rose and walked to and fro in the shadow, gnawing my lip. 'The odds are his!' I had said that too—and I had had my answer. And the glory, if it could be done! We should have a claim on Orange indeed then!

'Well?' asked Gaspar, as I lay down again.

'We try Breuthe,' I said curtly.

'Ay, ay, I thought so,' he grumbled. 'Why not wait for the convoys?'

'We try Breuthe!'

So we rode on in the darkness on a rash errand, because a girl laughed, while Gaspar swore and grumbled, and Henri Vermeil broke jests at all and sundry, and I rode silent with my eyes on my horse's mane, and the reins dangling loose in my hand.

There lay Alva; his tents loomed white through the darkness to eastward of the town. The pinewood sloped down to the very tent doors on his eastward side, but to the south the ground rose bare and steep. I sprang down and felt the brushwood. It crackled in my hand.

'S death! If we knew where the gates were,' I muttered.

'The main gate is on the east side.' I started and turned. It was the girl who had spoken.

'Are you certain?' I asked quickly. '*Cordieu!* not that it aids us; we can scarce ride through Alva's camp.'

'And the postern is to the south.'

'Ach! so,' grunted Gaspar. 'How wide?'

'Wide enough for a miller's wain.'

'You know it?' I cried; she nodded. 'He can scarce have his lines close drawn with that force,' said I, looking at Gaspar.

'No; but he wakes easily, Ferdinando Alvarez.'

'*Cordieu!* we will wake him! Double-horse half the convoy! Fire the other waggons! Spare the powder! Twist fuse there!'

Then did we fire the brushwood and the pines, and the flames swept roaring down before the east wind on Alva's tents; and down the bare hill we sent the powder-barrels bounding with a lighted fuse hissing at the end of each, till there was much noise among the Spaniards, and some of them woke hurriedly, and some of them never woke again. To and fro they ran, beating the flames, and the blazing staves of the powder barrels danced gaily amid the tents. So the grey morning light broke over Breuthe town with a camp burning yellow against the sun, and soldiers fighting a foe that used strange arms. Truly a burning powder barrel travelling swiftly is a weapon of much service. Wherefore to this day there be certain Spaniards think me the Devil; belike they are those who thought Alva a god.

Swiftly we moved round to the southward, and there in the first faint light of morning we saw the narrow postern, and a picket between us and it.

'Charge! Now, through to the gateway, charge!' I cried, and down we swept. The Spaniards would not meet us. They drew off to one side and up to the very walls we came without a man lost.

'For whom are ye?' cried the men on the walls.

'Orange, Orange,' shouted we all.

'Ach! the fools,' grunted Gaspar. Still the gates did not move.

'We fired the camp,' I shouted. 'Open, open in God's name! *Cordieu!* Do you doubt us? Look!'

There on our flanks hovered the picket, reinforced now, and we stayed there still like sheep with the fold gate shut.

'It's we or they,' I muttered. 'We must charge first. Wheel by the——'

'Let me pass! Let me pass!' cried the girl from the centre, where we had put her. She rode a little apart from us, and

'Open, open to me, Gabrielle de St. Trond!' she cried. Loud cries came from the walls, and in a moment the gate was flung wide.

'Vive Gabrielle de St. Trond!' cried Vermeil.

'Get the waggons through,' grunted Gaspar. 'A thousand fiends! Wheel about! Charge!'

And as they swept down, hoping to cut us off, Gaspar hurled himself with half our men at the Spaniards. I never knew a charge of Gaspar's fail. The slow heavy German, *cordieu!* when he charged he became a thunderbolt, and he tore through that Spanish troop, swung his men round, and dashed in at the gate on our heels.

There in the streets of Breuthe town—a dusty weary company—we halted.

'We are in!' cried Vermeil.

'Ay, who is the better for that?' quoth Gaspar.

'Faith, it was time,' said I. 'They have near quenched the fire.'

'Ach! breakfast is cooked,' grunted Gaspar. 'We must share ours with these, I suppose,' he grumbled, and turned to a townsman. 'You look hungry, my friend.'

'There is leather still,' said the man simply. His skin was stretched tight from bone to bone.

'Where is the governor?' I asked. A tall, stately man—they were all thin in Breuthe—came forward.

'At your service, sir, Laurenz de St. Trond,' said he.

'I am John Newstead, and these my men,' I answered. 'What harm we could do Alva we have done. What food we could bring we have brought. I would it were more, but——'

'I thank you, sir,' he broke in, 'I thank you. What of my daughter?'

'Your daughter? Oh, the girl—is she not here?'

'No, sir.' He could scarce speak the words, and we stood there silent, while I saw the gulps break in his throat and the

sunken eyes grow duller still. Cause enough there was ; I had fought with Alva, and how women fared in a Spanish camp I knew perhaps better than he, and I knew too well that his grief was just.

‘She may be dead,’ I said slowly. That was the only comfort.

‘I—I pray God. . . .’ he said under his breath.

I felt a fool and a knave before that man. Had I seen another man saved by my daughter, yet suffer her to fall into the hands of Spaniards, curses had been more ready to my lips than prayer. To break through Alva’s lines to bring a convoy into a town at its last gasp—yes, that was well enough. To be unable to save one poor girl from the fate of the women of Harlem—that was scarce as well. And it was the girl who had found us the postern, before whom the postern had opened to us ere she was borne away in Gaspar’s charge. *Cordieu!* I wished her father had struck me, and I believe I should have borne the blow.

‘How came she here, sir?’ he asked calmly.

‘A Spaniard carried her away from an inn beyond Veermut, and we caught him in the act. She begged us to bring her to Orange, and so she came with us.’

‘Ay the Spaniard, the Spaniard everywhere. *Exurge, Domine* . . . She was left there ill when I came to Breuthe ; and I thought her safe in hiding.’

‘Sir, we ought to have brought her safe. I would give my honour to do it now!’ I cried.

‘Once, sir, you saved her, and I thank you. You have done your duty in full,’ said Laurenz de St. Trond. ‘There are twenty men in Breuthe would go alone into Alva’s camp to save her were it possible for man ;’ he paused, and his lips trembled. ‘My God, my God, would it had been I!’ he cried with breaking voice, and then suddenly he turned to me. ‘And now, sir, to quarter your men,’ he said.

CHAPTER IV.

A COUNCIL OF DESPAIR.

‘By the eyes of God! I will not leave a rat alive within the walls of Breuthe!’ So the Duke of Alva had cried when his storming party was beaten down ; and the men who hurled back the best troops of Spain that day knew well what their fate would be if they failed then, or if they should fail thereafter.

But Alva's words had come true already. The tanneries had given up their hides, the trees were stript of their leaves, the very nettles that grew beneath the walls were plucked, and all had become food for the hollow-eyed, skin-cheeked men, who clung still to the little shattered town. Rats were a luxury of the past in Breuthe. So I stood on the wall gazing at the charred tents in Alva's camp, and back again at the lean sentinels that paced by me, and I saw that the end must come very soon. Nay, it did not daunt me; I have yet to hear of the day when John Newstead was daunted. There, too, somewhere in that half-burnt camp, was Gabrielle de St. Trond, dead or alive; and as I stood watching I vowed it should go hard with the man who took her if she were wronged, even a little. And of aught else was there little hope.

I walked slowly back to my quarters, and my chin was on my breast, and scheme after scheme went coursing through my brain. There Gaspar and Vermeil awaited me, and even Vermeil looked solemn.

'Ach! come at last, captain,' grunted Gaspar. I flung down my hat, loosed my belt, and sat.

'Am I needed?' quoth I.

'Gott! That is what I ask. Are any of us needed here?' I looked at him lazily; indeed, I was not thinking of his words. Quite other things were in my head than the grumbling of Gaspar; but he was in earnest. The broad red brow was bent in a heavy frown, his grey eyes were wide open and bright, and he sat with his head resting on a hand hidden in his thick curly hair.

'Needed?' I answered. 'Is Breuthe so strong?'

'Do we strengthen it?' said Gaspar slowly. 'Our food will not last long. Newstead's Company are not the men to feed on nettles. What is the end to be, captain? I like more than half a loaf, and there will not be half long.'

'Mutiny against me?' I cried.

'Nay, no one will mutiny,' said Vermeil smoothly; 'but it is well to consider the wishes of the men.'

'*Teufel!* I say they will mutiny,' quoth Gaspar. 'Men are men. Food is food. They'll mutiny sooner than starve. *Gott!* Do you blame them? Will you dine off cat-gut too?'

'Perhaps it is time to consider our plans,' said Vermeil. 'But no doubt you have some scheme, captain?'

'Scheme? *Cordieu!* No; I have only one scheme for mutineers—the halter!'

'Then you need a lusty hangman?' grunted Gaspar.

'Have you done?' I cried.

'Done? No! The townsfolk don't trust us. We shall have broken heads by the score soon, till Alva come in thirdsman.'

'That is true,' I muttered. 'You can scarce expect Breuthe to love the sackers of Harlem.'

'Ach! No; but we might have thought of that before.'

'We fight with the men we have,' quoth I.

'Then why reckon them angels,' grunted Gaspar.

'Well, well,' I said, 'what would you have me do, Gaspar?'

The German twisted himself in his chair, and scratched his head. Then he crashed his hand down on the table, and

'This!' he said. 'We must fight! We came in through Alva, and we must go out through him too. We can leave the convoy here for the Dutchmen. *Teufel!* Alva has more than one. And we might find the wench in his camp!'

I looked at Vermeil. He shrugged his shoulders a little.

'Ah! What say you, Vermeil?' I asked.

'There is much in Gaspar's plan,' said he. 'There is one thing he has forgotten. We can feed the men on convoys, but it will be hard to pay them the same way.'

'The wages of Orange!' I said. Vermeil spread out his hands.

'The wages of Orange? They will not take long a-counting,' he answered. 'We must have money. We cannot get money by staying in Breuthe, and there seems little to be got by going out. It is unfortunate there is no other way.' He paused and Gaspar and I both stared at the sleek olive face, and the twinkling green eyes.

'As Gaspar said very well, the men are not angels, and only angels and devils work for nothing. Besides that, to break through Alva's lines again may not be so easy as it was the first time, and Alva may not treat us kindly if he takes us. We have not deserved well at his hands. It is very unfortunate there is no other way.'

Again he paused, and Gaspar broke out:

'*Teufel!* Man, are you turned raven, with your endless croak? There is nothing easy; but we are desperate. Unfortunate! unfortunate! A thousand fiends! Are you turned coward?'

'I say what you say, my dear Gaspar. We are, indeed, desperate; that is why our council is held. But I say it is

unlucky we are desperate ; it is unfortunate we are constrained to a course which must lose so many men, perhaps all. I say it would be better if we had a chance of making terms with Alva—for example. It would be better—if it were not impossible.'

'Ach! why talk of the impossible?' grunted the German.

'He will scarce be willing to treat with deserters,' Vermeil went on, 'and deserters who have nothing to give and all to ask. If only we did not come empty-handed!' he added with a sigh.

'Words, words!' said Gaspar scornfully.

I looked at Vermeil, and his eyes met mine for a moment and dropped; for an instant, and only an instant, he seemed to smile.

'There is just one thing we could aid him to,' said Vermeil. Gaspar shifted his chair. 'The fruit is all but ripe enough to fall, and yet he might thank the man who plucked it. Ah! if we were not deserters we might sell Breuthe.'

'Ten thousand devils! Sell Breuthe?' cried Gaspar, dashing his chair back.

'Ay, we might sell Breuthe,' I repeated slowly. Gaspar sprang up and stood leaning over us with one hand on the table.

'Sell Breuthe?' he shouted. 'I thought we were soldiers, not a money-grubbing pack of traitors double-dyed! Who made Breuthe yours to sell? You come to the aid of St. Trond here, you lose his daughter, and you sell his town! Mighty deeds! God in heaven! I tell you I will hold Breuthe against you myself, I, Gaspar Wiederman, against any ratting huckster in the town,' and he stormed out of the room.

'He seems moved, captain,' said Vermeil coolly.

'The men will follow the money, eh?' I asked.

'*Ma foi*, yes; men are men, as the good Gaspar said.'

'If I go to Alva, will you keep peace in the town?' said I.

'You—to Alva?' stammered Vermeil. 'He must know you brought us to Orange. Think of the risk. Send a message.'

'There will be more risk in my meeting Alva before all is done,' said I slowly. He stared at me in amazement, thinking he had scarce heard aright.

'I—I do not understand,' he muttered.

'You will,' I answered. 'I will be my own messenger. At all costs keep the peace till you see me again.'

So, just as the sun was setting, a wiry man in a cloak that hid his armour slipped out of the postern gate of Breuthe all alone, and turned towards Alva's camp. And behind me rose the grey walls

of the town that had baffled the Spaniard so long, gilt and crimsoned by the rays from the west.

Here and there, breaking the blue mist of the horizon, a dull red glare shone out, marking the forays of Alva's men. Somewhere beyond the horizon, beyond the farthest stretch of Alva's arm, William of Orange, William the Taciturn, sat brooding over the travelling land.

So I went forth to sell Breuthe.

(To be continued.)

Rhyme.

THE late Professor Max Müller recently told us that he once asked Lord Tennyson what was the advantage of rhyme, and that the poet replied, 'It helps the memory.'

The opinion of a poet on any subject connected with his craft is necessarily interesting, but it will probably strike the average layman as strange, that Lord Tennyson should have justified the use of rhyme by a merely utilitarian argument. It is true that few of us can tell the number of days in any given month without having recourse to the assistance of rhyme; and many of us can remember learning in our childhood certain rugged and somewhat incoherent lines which, by a process of translation from letters to figures, enabled one to give the date of the Flood, the building of the Temple, or the battle of Salamis. Yet the undoubted popularity of rhyme must surely rest upon some deeper foundation than that of utility. The frequency in our language of such words as 'hum-drum,' 'hob-nob,' 'helter-skelter,' 'tag-rag' etc. would seem to indicate the existence of almost instinctive liking for recurrent sounds, and it is even possible that Pickwick himself may owe some infinitesimal portion of his popularity to the wise selection of his name.

Yet, though rhyme now appears to appeal to an almost primitive sense, its use in poetry is not of very great antiquity. Rhyme was not, of course, employed systematically in classical Latin, though Goldsmith remarks that 'the ancients did not reject it as a blemish.' Milton, indeed, says that 'the jingling sound of like endings was a fault avoided by the learned ancients,' and it is true that such couplets as the following are rare:

ἦντε ἔθνεα εἰσι μελισσῶν ἀδινάων
πέρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομέναων :

but he can hardly have intended this remark to apply to the correspondence of the final syllables of the two halves of a Latin pentameter, as in:

Diriget in medio quis mea vela freto ?

In 1,200 lines of Ovid, taken at random, such rhymes occur once in every five couplets, while in Propertius the average is even

higher. The constant recurrence of similar sounds in the terminations of Latin verbs and nouns must have, almost inevitably, suggested rhyme, and although it never entirely superseded the older metrical forms, rhyming Latin verse was in use from the end of the fourth century.

Rhyme, borrowed from the Latin, makes its first appearance in English verse about the time of the Conquest, but it does not seem to have been adopted as a regular system till the thirteenth century. The metrical form of the earlier English poetry was based on alliteration, and the two systems—rhyme and alliteration—were coexistent as late as Chaucer.

It may be noticed that the ordinary spelling of the word 'rhyme,' due to a false etymology connecting it with the Greek word 'rhythm,' is quite modern. Milton apparently draws a distinction in meaning between 'rime' (the correct spelling) and 'rhime.' In his Introduction to *Paradise Lost* he justifies his rejection of 'rime,' i.e. the recurrence of like sounds, but in the poem itself he speaks of 'Things unattempted yet in prose or rhime,' where the word is obviously simply equivalent to 'verse.'

From Chaucer onwards the popularity of rhyme has been assured. Dr. Johnson observes: 'He that thinks himself capable of astonishing may write blank verse, but those that hope only to please must condescend to rhyme;' and a contemporary of Johnson writes:

Confirmed and settled by the nation's voice,
Rhyme is the poet's pride and people's choice.

That rhyme is the 'people's choice' is beyond question, but the statement that it is also the 'poet's pride' perhaps requires some modification. Milton, as we have seen, speaks scornfully of the 'jingling sound of like endings,' and Goldsmith refers to 'this vile monotony, the characteristic of modern verse,' though, with a delightful inconsistency that will be readily pardoned, he himself wrote exclusively in rhyming verse, and is, moreover, perhaps the most correct rhymester among English writers. This tendency on the part of poets, or at least of some poets, to disparage rhyme, may possibly be due to a consciousness that there is a certain amount of truth in the charge, or perhaps we should say, the theory, that 'Rhyme is the rudder of Verse,' and that

Those that write in rhyme still make
The one verse for the other's sake.

Made in this sweeping fashion, the charge might be honestly

repudiated by most poets; but that it is occasionally, and perhaps often, true is obvious to any reader, and is incidentally admitted by poets themselves.

Thus Cowper, justifying his use of blank verse in his translation of Homer, says: 'In an original work the author is free; if the rhyme be of difficult attainment, and he cannot find it in one direction, he is at liberty to find it in another.'

Goldsmith, again, speaks of 'the slavery of rhyme which often confines and more often corrupts the sense of all the rest.' Professor Max Müller indeed tells us that 'some of the more honest among them have even gone so far as to admit that their best thoughts have often been suggested to them by rhyme'; but he does not give the names of these heroically honest bards.

On the other hand, Johnson, who was ever a staunch supporter of rhyme as against blank verse, says: 'In blank verse the language suffers more from distortion to keep it out of prose than any inconvenience or limitation to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme.' Yet even Johnson did not approve of rhyme upon the stage. 'Dryden,' he says, 'wrote rhyming tragedies, till by the prevalence of manifest propriety he grew ashamed of making them any longer.' Johnson did not, however, perceive any 'manifest impropriety' in making stage characters talk in blank verse, and it was reserved for Mr. Weller sen. to carry the doctrine to its logical conclusion: 'No man ever talked in poetry 'cept a beadle on Boxin' Day or Warren's blackin'.'

A consciousness that there is at least a possible danger of rhyme becoming the 'rudder of verse' will perhaps also partially account for the eager insistence by some poets on the ease with which they write in rhyme. Cowper assures us that he frequently 'wrote more verses in a day with tags, than he could ever write without them'; and Pope not only 'lisp'd in numbers,' but in reply to the question why he had not translated Homer into blank verse, is reported to have given the reason 'that he could translate it more easily into rhyme'—a remark which drew from Johnson a singularly frank and uncompromising criticism: 'Sir, when Pope said that, he knew he lied.'

Johnson's remark not merely lacks elegance: it was probably not justified by the facts. Rhyming is the most mechanical part of the poet's craft; the ease with which it is performed is largely a matter of practice, and there can be little doubt that rhyme was easy to Pope, in the same sense that tight-rope walking was easy to Blondin.

Yet that the employment of rhyme does occasionally cause some difficulty, even to experts, is sufficiently shown by the very liberal amount of licence which most poets (and Pope among them) permit to themselves. Hazlitt remarks that 'Pope's rhymes are constantly defective, being rhymes to the eye instead of the ear, and this in a greater degree, not only than in later but than in preceding writers.' The latter part of this statement is certainly incorrect. Pope's rhymes are not much more defective than those of Cowper, Scott or Wordsworth, and considerably less so than those of Shakespeare and Dryden. The comparative accuracy, as regards rhyme, of a dozen well-known English poets may be roughly indicated by the following table. The figures indicate the number of imperfect rhymes occurring in a thousand lines taken at random, and the correctness of the rhyme is judged by the standard of modern pronunciation, except in a few instances where it is notorious that the pronunciation has been changed.

Shakespeare, 55	Tennyson, 32
Dryden, 47	Byron, }
Pope, 38	Campbell, } 28
Cowper, }	Moore, }
Scott, } 36	Keats, 20
Wordsworth, }	Goldsmith, 11.

If we examine a sufficient number of imperfect rhymes with the view of discovering whether the licence assumed by poets has any limits, or is governed by any law, we can hardly fail to come to the conclusion that, in a large proportion of instances, similarity of spelling is accepted as covering the want of any real identity in the vowel sounds. In the case of a few words having alternative spellings Dryden naively employs the form which affords the best rhyme to the eye, thus :

Which well the noblest objects knew to chuse,
The fighting warrior and recording Muse ;

but,

Without my leave a future king to choose
Infers a right the present to depose.

So, too, he rhymes 'show' with 'go,' but 'shewed' with 'conclude.'

But though licence in rhyme is largely dependent on spelling, it is at least possible that poets may have, consciously or unconsciously, observed a law founded upon a more scientific basis.

An examination of the rhymes in Pope's *Essay on Man*, *Essay on Criticism*, and *Rape of the Lock*, will show that there are ninety-seven imperfect rhymes in about 2,800 lines, and

a further analysis of these rhymes leads to the following conclusions.

1. Imperfect rhymes very rarely occur between words ending in a vowel sound. There are only four instances (out of ninety-seven), and three of these are almost certainly explained by changes in pronunciation since Pope's time. Identity in the final consonants is therefore evidently regarded as justification for a certain amount of disparity in the preceding vowel sound.

2. More than one-fifth of the imperfect rhymes occur between words in which the vowel sound is followed by the letter *r*.

3. Imperfect rhymes occur (with very few exceptions) only between sounds that, though not identical, are phonetically allied, as will be explained below.

The principal vowel sounds in English are usually arranged as follows :

Simple Sounds.

beet	—	bate	—	balm		bawl	—	boat†	—	boot†§
	X		X				X		X	
*bit	—	bet	—	bat		botch	—	but	—	book§

Diphthongs.

*file — foil foul† — few§.

In this table the upper line gives the long vowel sounds and the lower the corresponding short sounds. It will be found that the words in each line are arranged in a natural series, determined by the method in which the vowel sound is produced, and that in each series the first three sounds are widely separated from the last three.

Now in the three poems under consideration ninety out of the ninety-seven imperfect rhymes occur where the two sounds are next door neighbours in the above table: that is to say, where they are connected by vertical, lateral or diagonal lines; and in this way such rhymes as 'speak'—'take,' 'showed'—'trod,' 'mast'—'placed' etc. may be, at any rate, partially justified.

In the diphthong *i* the second element is a short *i*, which seems to justify the rhyme 'light'='wit.' The diphthong *oi* contains the same second element and rhymes with *i*: as 'line'='join.'

On the same principle *ou* and *ew* may both rhyme with *oo*. Thus 'cowl'='fool,' 'view'='too,' and by a slight extension 'gown'='own,' 'endued'='good.'

In the very few instances where the rhymes cannot be brought into harmony with the above scheme the vowel is in every case followed by the letter *r*. Now it will be observed

that the table makes no provision for the vowel sound heard in 'beer,' 'bare,' 'bore,' 'boor.' These sounds are practically diphthongs, the second element in each being the neutral vowel heard in the words 'her,' 'fir,' 'fur,' a simple sound not included in the scheme. The quasi-diphthongs in 'beer,' 'bare,' 'bore,' and 'boor,' may, then, for convenience be ranked with the long vowels which form their first element (*i.e.* those in 'beet,' 'bate,' 'boat,' and 'boot,') and the rhyme of 'ear' with 'fair' may be justified on the same grounds as 'speak'='take.' There still remains the vowel sound of 'her,' 'fir,' 'fur.' This is nearly allied to, though not quite identical with, the vowel sound in 'but,' and if this position be assigned to it there are seven out of ninety-seven imperfect rhymes which cannot be reduced to rule: *e.g.* 'pierce'='universe.' But if it were possible to treat the vowel sound in 'her,' 'fir' etc. as really neutral, or as being allied indifferently to 'bet' and 'but,' there would be only two irreducible rhymes out of the ninety-seven, viz. 'appear'='are,' 'care'='war'; and it might be plausibly argued that, if Pope—'a true deacon of the craft'—may be accepted as a representative rhymester, the licence which poets allow themselves is governed and limited by some sort of scientific principle.

It is evident that in some cases rhyme may help to preserve a record of the pronunciation of a word prevalent at a particular period; but, owing to the licence which was and is permitted, the evidence of rhyme is not altogether conclusive as regards vowel sounds.

Thus we are told that in Queen Anne's time 'tea' was pronounced 'tay,' and a well-known couplet from the *Rape of the Lock* is quoted as proof. The statement is probably correct, but its correctness is not proved by the quotation. In the first place the rhyme would probably have been considered by Pope a permissible one, even if the word 'tea' had been pronounced as it is now. Such rhymes as 'speak'='take,' 'weak'='break' constantly occur. Secondly, we find in the *Basset Table* (attributed to Pope or to Lady Montagu) 'tea' rhyming with 'stay' in one place, but with 'decree' in another. It occurs also as a rhyme to 'refugee' in Prior. Again, we find that Pepys took a cup of 'tee' on September 25, 1660, and the *Mercurius Politicus* (two years earlier) makes the following announcement: 'That excellent, and by all Physicians approved, China drink, called by the Chineans Tchah, and by other nations Tay alias Tee, is sold at the Sultaness Coffeehouse.' Whatever the pro-

nunciation of 'tea' may have been in Pope's time, it was apparently followed, appropriately enough, in 'bohea.' If rhyme may be accepted as proof of pronunciation, there is abundant evidence that 'sea' was pronounced 'say,' in Dryden's time, or at least by Dryden, who constantly rhymes it with such words as 'obey,' 'prey' etc. Mr. Christie says, indeed, that this rhyme is uniform in Dryden, but there is at least one exception in 'Astræa Redux,' where 'seas' rhymes with 'ease.'

There is little doubt that during the eighteenth and perhaps the early years of the nineteenth century the diphthong *oi* was pronounced *i*, and the evidence of rhyme is in this instance so abundant and so consistent as to be almost conclusive by itself. Such rhymes as 'join'—'line,' 'spoil'—'guile,' and even 'joy'—'ally' are very frequent. There are nine instances in the *Hind and Panther* alone and at least two dozen in the works of Pope, while the same combination is found occasionally, at any rate, in Gray, Johnson, Burns, Keats, Byron and Wordsworth. Further evidence is afforded by the modern pronunciation of 'choir' with its alternative spelling 'quire,' and by a now obsolete spelling of the word 'coin,' viz. 'quine'; but perhaps the survival of this pronunciation as a vulgarism in such words as 'join,' is the best proof that it was once recognised as correct.

It would, of course, be impossible to fix precisely the time when 'join' ceased to be pronounced 'jine' by educated people, for a given pronunciation may survive in poetry as a conventional rhyme long after it has ceased to be common in ordinary speech. We know, for instance, that in Johnson's time 'wind' was already pronounced in conversation with the short *i*. But when a particular pronunciation begins to be indicated by phonetic spelling, we may be sure that it is no longer regarded as correct. And so we know that when Sam Weller marvelled why a 'biled' leg of mutton should be called a 'swarry,' the distinction between *oi* and *i* had already been established.

Again, it is practically certain that in such words as 'serve,' 'reserve,' 'observe,' the *e* was pronounced as *a* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We find 'starve' rhyming with 'deserve' etc., and though this fact by itself would prove little, further evidence is afforded by the alternative spellings of 'starve,' 'sterve,' 'desert,' 'desart,' by the modern pronunciation of 'clerk' and 'Derby,' and by the survival of 'sarvant' as a vulgarism.

Though the evidence of rhyme is not by itself conclusive evidence as to the pronunciation of vowel sounds, the case is different where consonants are concerned. We find, indeed, such

rhymes as 'prize,' = 'sacrifice,' 'cease,' = 'ease,' and 'death' = 'breathe,' and Pope once commits the atrocity of coupling 'clothes' with 'those'; but, as a rule, he, and the poets generally, strictly preserve a correct correspondence of final consonants. So when we find in Pope :

The daily anodyne and nightly draught,
To kill those foes to fairness, time and thought ;

and in Dryden :

When at the fountain head, as merit ought
To claim the place, you take a swilling draught ;

we may assume with tolerable confidence that 'draught' was pronounced 'draut.' Similarly the pronunciation of the word 'farthing' at the end of the seventeenth century seems indicated by the following :

Our churchwardens
Feed on the silver and give us the farthings.—GAY.
Else all these things we toil so hard in
Would not avail a single farthing.—PRIOR.

The word 'fault' was almost certainly pronounced without the *l* in the time of Queen Anne, and perhaps through half the eighteenth century. It occurs as a rhyme to 'thought,' 'brought' etc. at least a dozen times in Pope, several times in Goldsmith—most correct of rhymesters—and in Sheridan. It is noticeable, however, that in Shakespeare 'fault' occurs as a rhyme to 'assault' and to 'halt.' It is quite possible, and even probable, that 'assault' was also pronounced without the *l*, but 'halt' is more difficult to explain. Johnson, in his Dictionary, says the *l* in 'fault' is sometimes omitted in conversation; but this pronunciation was evidently not uniform in his time, and in 1818 Todd, in his edition of Johnson, says that 'no person of tolerable education would expose himself to the charge of ignorance or affectation by leaving out the *l*.'

The old pronunciation of 'chariot' is marked in the lines :

Entering the town in triumph for it,
Bore a slave with him in his chariot.—BUTLER,

and more closely in Pope :

From drawing-rooms, from colleges, from garrets—
On horse, on foot, in hacks and gilded chariots ;

and that this pronunciation lasted until the nineteenth century is indicated by the metre in Southey's Sapphics, parodied in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

Fast o'er the heath a chariot rattled by her.

'Balcony,' with the accent on the penultimate appears in a couplet by a writer in Dodsley's *Collection* :

Pots o'er the door I'll place like cits' balconies,
Which Bentley calls the gardens of Adonis ;

and, though we know that the modern pronunciation was beginning to be adopted early in the nineteenth century, and that it made Rogers 'sick,' Byron preserves the long *o* :

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were ; and so they are—
Particularly seen from a balcony.

It has been seen that a given pronunciation sometimes survives as a conventional rhyme long after it has ceased to be usual in conversation. Conversely there is at least one instance in which a set of rhymes is still rigidly tabooed, though modern pronunciation would partially justify their admission. The 'cockney rhyme,' as it is called, *e.g.* 'morn' = 'dawn,' 'short' = 'caught' etc., is held to be unpardonable, yet in the word 'morn,' as now ordinarily pronounced, at any rate in the South of England, the *r* is not sounded at all, or so slightly as to have no consonantal value, and the rhyme, if not absolutely perfect, is far closer than that of 'move' = 'grove' = 'love,' 'speak' = 'break,' and many others that are accepted without hesitation.

Rhymes are so scarce in this world of ours that the ingenuity of poets—or perhaps we should say rhymesters—is often severely tested, especially in dealing with double and treble rhymes. Adam Smith observes that these are reserved by the best writers for 'light and ludicrous occasions,' and though such poems as Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* show that the use of such rhymes are certainly not incompatible with a grave subject, the statement is, no doubt, generally correct. There are some words to which, as it is generally supposed, 'no rhyme our language yields,' and among them are usually mentioned 'chimney' and 'window.' Yet both these words have been 'tackled' with more or less success by versifiers of repute. In the *Rejected Addresses* we have 'slim-knee' = 'chimney,' and Browning rhymes 'Hindoos' with windows.' Canning in one place adopts the same rhyme, but in another he cuts the Gordian knot by boldly adopting the spelling sanctioned by the authority of Dotheboys Hall, and making 'winder' rhyme with 'tinder.'

Butler may probably be regarded as the father of burlesque rhyming ; but considerable progress has been made in the craft since his day, and the rhymes of *Hudibras*, though they seem to have afforded great amusement to our forefathers, are forced and

clumsy in comparison with the achievements of Byron, Hood and Barham. For example, Butler's often quoted rhyme for 'philosopher' lacks the neatness of Byron's

He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

Marvellous ingenuity in rhyming is exhibited on every page of the *Ingoldsby Legends*: as specimens we may quote:

Should it even set fire to the castle and burn it, you're
Amplly insured both for buildings and furniture;

and

Messrs. Howard and Gibbs made him bitterly rue it he
'd ever raised money by way of annuity.

Even such unpromising names as Demosthenes and Mephistopheles are handled with apparent ease. Thus:

The *Times* made it clear he was perfectly lost in his
Classic attempt at translating Demosthenes.

There's Setebos storming because Mephistopheles
Dashed in his face a whole cup of hot coffee lees.

Examples of rhyme obtained by the division of a word are seen in the following:

Citizen or Squire, Tory, Whig or Radical
-cal would all desire Peg of Limavaddy.—THACKERAY.

Here doomed to starve on water gruel,
-el, never shall I see the University of Gottingen.—*Anti-Jacobin*.

Who would not give all else for two pennyworth
-ennyworth only of beautiful soup?—LEWIS CARROLL.

As instances of what might perhaps be called international rhyming, as distinct from strict Macaronic verse, we may give:

Who can fly from himself? Bitter cares, when you feel 'em,
Are not cured by travel. As Horace says, 'Cælum
Non animum mutant qui currunt trans mare.'
It's climate not mind that by roaming men vary;

and again

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus;
Bring me a chop and a couple of potatoes.

Few modern writers have exhibited more ingenuity and audacity in rhyming than Mr. Browning. In his case, however, a remarkable facility in devising burlesque rhymes is accompanied by what seems a singular incapacity for selecting appropriate occasions for their employment.

In *The Glove* we have

Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed
Her and the horrible pitside;

and

Whose faculties move in no small mist
When he versifies David the Psalmist;

and 'well swear' = 'elsewhere,' 'sequel' = 'week well,' 'doorway' = 'more weigh.

The constant recurrence in this poem of such combinations seems to indicate that a burlesque effect was here deliberately intended, though the subject of the poem can scarcely be described as comic. The same remark applies to the *Flight of the Duchess* where we have such lines as the following:

Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,
Some day or other, his head in a morion
And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll kick up,
Slain by an onslaught fierce of hiccup;
And then, when red doth the sword of our Duke rust,
And its leathern sheath lies o'ergrown with a blue crust, etc.

In *Old Pictures in Florence*, it is certainly startling to come suddenly upon such rhymes as these:

I, that have haunted the dim San Spirito,
Patient on altar-step planting a weary toe;

and in a really fine poem like the *Grammarian's Funeral*, the effect of the last of the following lines is disastrous:

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure,
'Wilt thou trust death or not?' He answered, 'Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure';

and again:

Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick.

Perhaps, however, the greatest achievement in this way is to be found in *Master Hugues*, a poem which is not exactly 'light and ludicrous':

Three makes rejoinder, expansive, explosive;
Four overbears them all, strident and crepitant;
Five . . . O Danaides! O Sieve!

FRANK RITCHIE.

The Women of the Salons.

IV. MADAME GEOFFRIN.

ONE of the intimates of Madame Geoffrin remarks one day in her Salon that everything is perfect *chez elle* except the cream.

'What will you?' says Madame. 'I cannot change my milk-woman.'

'Why not?'

'Because I have given her two cows.'

'Voilà,' says a biographer, 'le rare et le délicat.'

The incident is, indeed, quite characteristic of the woman whose motto is 'Donner et pardonner,' who has a tact that is almost genius, and a heart so kind, tender, honest and generous that there is not one of the *salonnières* upon whose memory it is pleasanter to linger.

Marie Thérèse Rodet is born at Paris in 1699. She is, says one authority, the daughter of a *valet de chambre* of the Dauphine; while another has it that the valet is of Dauphigny. Everybody is agreed that her origin is entirely obscure and *bourgeoise*. Her parents die when she is in her cradle. She is brought up, but not educated, by a shrewd and illiterate old grandmother, who has a theory that if a woman is a fool learning will only accentuate her folly, and that if she is clever she will do well enough without it. There is something to be said for this idea.

At fifteen Marie marries a M. Geoffrin, who is also *bourgeois*, enormously wealthy, and a lieutenant-colonel of the National Guard. They have a daughter, afterwards the Marquise de la Ferté-Imbault. M. Geoffrin dies. With the exception of one famous visit to the King of Poland at Warsaw, Madame never leaves Paris, even for a day. She holds there the Salon which has made her famous, and dies there full of years and honour in 1777.

This greatest of all the *salonnières* has, therefore, no history.

That is, if outward events make a history. But there are some people who could write the incidents of their life on a thumb-nail, and who yet have known great emotions, exercised wide influence, and left behind them a more lasting reputation than many kings and dynasties. Perhaps Madame Geoffrin is one of these.

There are so few records of the early part of her life that what she is in her brief girlhood is mostly a matter of conjecture. She does not seem to wish to learn any more than the clever old grandmother wishes to teach. She has no masters. She never even knows how to spell. But she is made to read—and to read much—and, what is better than all the reading in the world, to think. She is very little instructed in facts, and a great deal in principles; versed in no science but the science of human nature; shown how to look at things simply as they are; and certainly not left in the arid condition of the *pédante* who, having stuffed her head full of information, leaves quite uncultivated her heart, her tact, her sympathy, and that deeper wisdom which is not of books. The little Marie, too, has always before her the example of the humorous and clear-minded old *bourgeoise*, who ‘talked so pleasantly of the things she did not know that no one ever wished she knew them better,’ and who at least, if results are to be trusted, showed the grandchild that noblest of the arts—how to live well.

Can't one fancy what a very bright, modest, sensible little girl this Marie is likely to be when at fifteen she marries her M. Geoffrin? The marriage seems to be the usual *mariage de convenance*, inevitable at that date. Monsieur is a dull, heavy, honest, ugly person. There is one little story to the effect that in studying the Encyclopædia, printed in two columns, he reads straight across the page, and remarks afterwards that the book seems very fair, but a trifle obscure; and another little story to the effect that he will read the first volume of a history or book of travels, written in several volumes, over and over again, and then wonder that the author should so much repeat himself. The stories are not true, very likely. But if they are, one cannot but think that even this stupidity has, as it were, its own especial appeal to the wide, kindly heart of the girlish wife. It is only a very shallow cleverness that is annoyed at stupidity after all. It is your wise people who can afford to treat it very gently—seeing how little it is the wisest can know—and who would have a fellow-feeling for that worthy, silent old manufacturer of ices (this is M. Geoffrin's trade) at the head of the table trying vainly to catch the sense of the witty, elusive

talk going on round him, and not a little thankful to get back to solitude, where he can be as unintellectual as he feels inclined, and practise comfortably on his *trompette marine* by the hour together.

There is no evidence to show that Madame does not treat Monsieur with at least as much sympathy and thoughtfulness as she treats all the world. He gives her great wealth, for which a woman who so loves to make others happy can't but be grateful. Her beautiful rooms are full of perfect statuary and pictures. She is enabled, and already beginning, to entertain her friends. This little *bourgeoise*, with her fine talent for order and decorum, must needs regulate her husband's home well and happily. Though he is a nonentity, a respectable old figure-head to her guests, it does not follow he is nothing more to her. The stranger who inquires presently what has become of the old man who used to be at Madame's dinners, and is now there no more, and is met by the reply, 'C'était mon mari; il est mort,' represents the attitude towards M. Geoffrin of some of Madame's friends, but not that of Madame herself.

It is said that she receives what may be called her training for her Salon from the clever and corrupt Madame de Tencin. That may be. No training, however brilliant, could fit a woman unfitted in heart and character to be, not merely the hostess, but the friend, confidante, mother as it were, of the most brilliant genius of the eighteenth century.

The Salon of Madame Geoffrin is one of the wonders of the social world. She has no position. She can claim as father a *valet de chambre* in an age when the aristocracy won't touch the *canaille* with the tips of their white fingers. She is wealthy, indeed, but in a time when all the *noblesse* are also wealthy (with their rich places and perquisites and blood-money from the taxes), so that there is not then, as now, an acknowledged aristocracy of bullion. Her *trompette marine*, with his fortune made in trade, is no great help to her. She is not beautiful. She has little, gentle, old-maidish ways that never even let her seem young. She is respectable when decorum of manners is highly unpopular, and taken to be a tacit reproach, in the very worst taste, upon modish levity. She is, as has been seen, uneducated.

And to her rooms soon flock *savants*, philosophers, artists, nobles, princes, ambassadors, politicians, reformers. On Monday one dines here—the perfection of a little dinner, simple, suitable, well-chosen—the guests mostly painters and sculptors. What does Madame know about art? Nothing, except what a refined

natural taste can teach her. On Wednesdays the dinner is literary—Marmontel, Holbach, D'Alembert, Gibbon, Hume, Horace Walpole, and, the only woman besides the hostess, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Can't one hear the conversation? Madame Geoffrin has the supreme art of making other people talk their best. She knows just where to put in a word or to ask a question. She has in perfection that finer accomplishment—how to listen. She might very well know more about books than she does. But it is impossible that she should sympathise better with the makers of books, their hopes, cares, fears, ambition. These men tell her their difficulties. She advises them, helps them, cheers them. She is their good angel—quite a human good angel, with that prim exactness about her dress, lavender-scented, dainty, quiet, with her spotless muslins about her neck, the little cap tied under her chin—the very soul of gentle good sense, gay, kind, wise, natural, orderly.

After the dinners she receives all her world. What an assembly it is! This Salon is at once the most catholic and the most particular of all the Salons. Here, it is said, sovereigns meet their people. The aristocracy of genius is brought close to the aristocracy of birth. Is one clever, poor, obscure—or titled and famous? The two meet on common ground and are both the better. Here are Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Algarotti, and Lord Shelbourne. Stanislas Augustus, afterwards king of Poland, is a 'host' of the company, and brings in his train the Polish nobles and notabilities of the day. Here D'Alembert meets often his fatal passion, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Here is Grimm, who has come straight from another and a very different Salon and influence—that of his mistress, Madame d'Épinay. Horace Walpole, perhaps, has been at Madame du Deffand's.

In this corner one is complimenting Bernardin de Saint-Pierre on his *Paul et Virginie*, 'that swan song of old dying France.' In another there is a group of laughing girls—for Madame loves such, as they love her. Women of fashion talk with the rugged old *bourgeois* reformers, who first of all should reform *their* class and character. The broken French of those 'foreigners of distinction,' who never pass through Paris without visiting Madame Geoffrin, is audible everywhere. Vanloo and Vernet are looking at the priceless pictures and statuary—bought out of the *trompette's* ice-money. And over all, the genius of good taste, good order, good sense, presides that woman who is well called the 'invisible Providence' of her assemblies, Madame Geoffrin.

Though she must be very young when she first begins to receive a society more illustrious than any since the days of Madame de Rambouillet, she has from the very first the quiet sageness of middle life, and that aversion to change, hastiness and discord which one does not associate with youth. Are they talking politics? Madame knows nothing of politics. They make people bitter, argumentative, quarrelsome. She listens a little while; then, when the discussion grows too heated, interposes with her 'Voilà qui est bien.' That is her oil on troubled waters, her password to harmony, fairness and reason. In her rooms there is always a calm—though it be but the calm before the storm. The distant rumble of the thunder of that tempest that is soon to burst over France is not heard in this quiet place. By Madame's fireside, indeed, and under Madame's peaceful influence, one whispers of those doctrines which will presently *bouleverser* the world. But it is the writers, not the actors, of that great drama who gather here, and when they get too fiery and hot-headed in their discussions, as some needs must, they drift away naturally from the gathering of Madame Geoffrin to the greater liberty allowed by Holbach and Helvétius.

Madame has a little supper-party for a few chosen intimates when her world has gone away. She does not even now talk much herself—only interposes now and then with a gay little story or a kind little axiom. All her sayings are kind, it seems. It is not so difficult to be witty if one is permitted to be a little bitter too. But to be witty and to see persistently the best side of people and motives is by no means so easy. If Madame believed less in her friends she could not help them half so much. It is not hard to understand why these impulsive, brilliant Frenchmen come to this wise little *bourgeoise* with their confidences and confessions. She scolds them well—*à part*—when the supper is over; but she understands them perfectly, and has the charity that believeth and hopeth all things, and that makes the most fallen once more believe and hope in himself.

All her friends are not, of course, brilliant people. Is it Madame Geoffrin Shenstone is thinking of in particular when he writes of the Frenchwoman in general?—'There is a quality in which no woman in the world can compete with her—it is the power of intellectual irritation. She will draw wit out of a fool.' There is a charming story told of Madame Geoffrin, who finds herself *tête-à-tête* for a whole long winter evening with a worthy and insufferable old bore of an abbé. What is to be done? Yawn

in each other's faces? Die of *tristesse* and *ennui* under a mask of social smiles? Madame, 'inspired by the desperate situation,' sets herself to work to make the bore amusing; and succeeds so well that when he leaves her she gives him a little compliment on his 'bonne conversation.' 'Madame,' says he, 'I am only the instrument on which you have played beautifully.'

This is the key at once to her character and to her social success. She 'plays beautifully' the noble music of the great masters on instruments from which others only extract the vile jingle of street songs or the fierce passions of the 'Marseillaise.' She does not only draw cleverness from the stupid, but goodness from the corrupt. Instead of the licence and indecency of the gatherings of Mademoiselle Quinault, there are her modest little suppers, where even Burigny, her dear major-domo, is not required to keep order, because she knows so well how to keep it herself. She still stands out, with her carefully regulated home and her serene mind, as the noblest high-priestess of decency and right. She still gives the lie to the delusion (which even now obtains in her country, if one can judge by its fiction and plays) that virtue *must* be stupid. If in reading of her, with that lack of events in her history and that gentle regularity in her daily life, she seems dull even for a moment, the fault lies only with her biographer, and not with the woman who for fifty years is as a mother, beloved, worshipped, honoured by the most brilliant spirits of her age.

It is in her own Salon that she first learns that affection, which she carries with her to her grave, for Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, afterwards King of Poland. He appears to be an honest, well-intentioned person, not at all incapable of warm feelings, or at all adequate to the tremendous situation in which he finds himself. To Madame he is her 'fils' and her 'bien aimé.' A prince? A king-elect? A king? What does that matter? He is, first of all, as it were her son. She has the gift of looking straight through the trappings of royalty, fame, position, at the man within them.

In 1764 the Cabinets of Petersburg and Berlin set him on the Polish throne, and Madame writes to him as 'Sire' and 'Majesty,' and regards him for ever as the child who wants help and sympathy on a difficult way, with whom one may quarrel a little, but whom, feeble or strong, in or out of power, one must needs love to the end.

The letters the pair exchange are not remarkable as literary compositions. Madame's are full of the faults of orthography for

which she is famous. They have very few of the blithe little anecdotes and epigrams which make her conversation delightful. She is writing to a man always in danger, fear, difficulty; and is herself the most sympathetic of women. So what would one have? They have no great political interest, or only that feminine view of politics which always centres on the politician. But they are not the less letters which even a king might have been glad to receive. If anyone will look back on some cherished correspondence of his own, he will find in it, it may be pretty safely said, less wit and brilliancy even than Stanislas found in Madame Geoffrin's. It is only posterity which demands cleverness and comment on contemporary history in a letter; the receiver only needs the touch of the writer's hand, the assurance of affection and faithfulness, and the reminder that the only real separation is that which causes no pain.

Madame has been corresponding with her son and King only a few months when the idea of visiting him at Warsaw takes possession of her heart. She is now sixty-five years old. She has never been out of Paris in her life. She has preferred her 'rue de la rue de Saint-Honoré' to all the splendid places of the world. The difficulties of travelling in that time are hardly estimable. She has no one to go with her. Her daughter is married and has her own ties. Madame has to tear herself from a Salon of perhaps forty years' standing. But the idea grows and then dominates her. She and her King have a quarrel on paper, and the scheme seems likely to be abandoned. They have a reconciliation, and their reunion is the necessary consequence. One has to be a woman, perhaps, and to understand that maternal yearning in every woman's heart, to realise the absorbing nature of the desire to see her 'bien aimé' again which makes Madame Geoffrin pursue her plan against everybody's advice and carry it out in the teeth of difficulty. Her 'bien aimé' himself has been more than a little doubtful about his 'chère maman' attempting a journey so hazardous. He has warned her often of the drawbacks she will find. He will do his best for her—she shall be infinitely honoured and beloved—but drawbacks there will be; and she pays no attention to his cautions—or, rather, listens to them, and persists.

In the end of June 1766, escorted by the Comte de Loyko, Chamberlain to Stanislas, Madame Geoffrin, *bourgeoise*, starts with an almost royal progress, and with, it is said, the eyes of Europe upon her, on the first stage of her travels. Can't one see

her looking out from the windows of that 'berline,' built for the occasion, upon the new world? A widely travelled generation can hardly fancy the excitement and eagerness, doubt, fear, anticipation which such a journey must represent in the mind of a woman who belongs to the most stay-at-home people of a stay-at-home age. And behold, this is Vienna! Not Paris, indeed, but not all contemptible. Madame parts here from Loyko, who is replaced by the Captain Bachone who speaks all languages and is prepared, it appears, to travel with suites of furniture, cooks, provisions, silver plate, to render Madame's journey as little inconvenient as may be. At Vienna the greatest nobility of the land receive this clever, dignified daughter of the people with their very best parties and welcome. Maria Theresa shows her the finest kindness and sympathy. She sees all the Austrian Royal Family—'the prettiest thing one can imagine'—at Schoenbrunn. Here is the young Marie Antoinette, hardly twelve years old, and already lovely as an angel. 'The Archduchess told me to write to France and say I have seen her, this little one, and find her beautiful.' Is this the first footstep of that grim destiny which is to overtake 'the Austrian,' falling on the threshold of her life? 'Arrière-petite-fille du roi de France.' 'Lovely as an angel.' 'Write to your country and say you found her so.' It would be but a part of the fitness of fate that one of the first little nails in the coffin of monarchy and of the Queen should be driven there by the daughter of a *valet de chambre*.

Madame would be sorry to leave Vienna, no doubt, if she could have room for such a feeling as sorrow in her heart when she is getting nearer every hour to this son of her age and her affection. She has expressed herself so warmly and decidedly in that quarrel they have had! She is so anxious to see him, and tell him that she would not have been half so angry if she had loved him less. To her serene nature the omnipotence of fate or death to dash the cup of realisation from one's lips, even at the last moment, is not so vivid as to a less sanguine temperament. She looks forward to their meeting with a sure heart. They are to be so happy, son and mother once more—a French son and mother, be it understood, between whom is that intimacy and confidence not half so well known to the relationship in other countries. He is to tell her what he has done, is doing, is going to do. They will talk over his marriage, his prospects, his thousand daily difficulties in that stormy kingdom, which needs the strongest man at its head, and has a very amiable one. She will

advise him, scold him, help him. She does not know much about his Polish politics, but she can learn. She is all for him, and not at all for herself. She wants no advancement, no place for her friends, no influence used here or word spoken there—nothing but the good of one person—Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski.

No one who has lived long in the world will wonder that this meeting at Warsaw does not fulfil all it promised. It is a truism, but not less a truth, that the only unalloyed happiness in life is anticipation, and that the happiest people are those whose dreams are unrealised. These two, who love each other sincerely, disagree upon a thousand minor and immaterial points, as many other sincere lovers have done before and after them. They can't consent to differ. (Has one ever met a woman who could let a man think differently from her without dragging that difference to the fore, and discussing and threshing it out a hundred times a day?) Madame suffers not a little. Stanislas lodges her with splendour and honour. She obtains—if that is any advantage—a very good idea of the tottering state of this poor little kingdom, torn by internal dissension, the plaything of the greater Powers. She receives during her stay in Poland letters from Voltaire and Marmontel. Her whole visit there lasts only a little more than two months. When she is back again in Paris she is able to write of it with enthusiasm. But there are not the less those clouds on her happiness. When she has gone away Stanislas writes in terms of a passionate regret, and she answers him from Vienna that the 'tu' in which he addresses her is an 'illusion of Satan,' and recalls 'all that I have suffered.' There have been, it is said, influences at work upon the King which Madame dreads for him, and of which she can't persuade him to rid himself. They will love each other better when they are separated. It is from a distance that one obtains the best view of a city. Too near, one sees the defects of a part, and not the beauty of the whole.

The pair resume their correspondence with all their old fervour when Madame is back again in her Paris. She sympathises once more with all Stanislas' difficulties and trials, which do not get fewer as the years go on. She is now, as ever, the genius of common-sense and quiet reason—calm, far-seeing, judicious. Petty jealousies are quite forgotten in the very real and daily growing need Stanislas has of her faithful friendship. In 1769 she is able to write to him, 'When one is young, one's pleasure, passions, tastes even, form attachments and break them. My feeling for you depends on none of these things; therefore it has

lasted. It has lasted in spite of candour and plain speaking, and will last to the end of my life.'

Madame is now seventy years old. Famine, financial disorder, and parties in the Court and Government, who sacrifice the public good to gratify private malice, make the condition of France appear deplorable, even to a woman whose nature is at all times gently optimistic. But the misfortunes of her own country are light beside those of her King's.

In 1772 takes place the first partition of Poland. By 1792, when the second partition breaks Poniatowski's heart, and he retires to Petersburg, to live there till his death in 1798, with, it is said, no consolation but that taste for letters he learnt of Madame Geoffrin, she has long gone the way of all flesh. She writes to him so long as she can handle a pen, loves him as long as she has a heart to love with; and in her last letter to him tells him that she cannot express her joy at leaving him happy and content. So that even Fate is sometimes merciful.

The close of Madame Geoffrin's life is like its beginning, well-ordered and regular. She continues to receive her friends in her Salon when she is a very old woman. In the summer of 1776 she is attacked by paralysis. The attack is brought on, say some, by too close an attendance at a Church festival. It may be. Though Madame has been the intimate of the philosophers, has listened many times in her rooms to the free expression of free-thought, and has been a warm patroness of the *Encyclopædia*, yet it is not a little in keeping with the tranquil conservatism of her character that orthodoxy should claim her at last. Her daughter, Madame la Marquise de la Ferté-Imbault, who is properly aristocratic and conventional, takes possession of her mother's bed, and won't let those adventurous souls, Morellet, D'Alembert, Marmontel, come near it. The sick woman is past troubling at their exclusion; or perhaps, like many others, after having in life reasoned and wondered, is glad to die in the bosom of that Church whose great attraction to the soul is that it admits no doubts, saying with that self-confidence which gives confidence, 'Behold, I am the Truth! Rest in me.' Madame at least only smiles when she learns that her daughter is thus 'guarding her tomb from the infidels.' It is thought that her reason is dimmed a little. But she is able to make her preparations for death 'gaiement' almost as she made them for her journey to Poland. She has been always gently cheerful, and she is cheerful now. When she overhears the people about her bed making fine suggestions of the

means Government might employ to make the masses happy, she rouses herself to say: 'Ajoutez-y le soin de procurer les plaisirs.' It is her last recorded utterance.

The character of Madame Geoffrin is quite simple. She is less a great woman than a good one. A great woman is the phoenix who rises from the ashes of her sex's littleness once in a thousand years; and is in proportion to great men about one to a hundred. Madame does not electrify the world. But she leaves her corner of it fairer, kinder, wiser; makes by her character and influence a cool oasis, very pleasant to rest in, in the desert of French philosophism, atheism, and immorality.

A thousand stories are told of her generosity, her tact, her honesty. The very people whom her *bourgeois* decorum and soberness must most reproach cannot but like her. 'I am so crazy, and she is so prudent,' writes Galiani to Madame Necker. 'Still I love her, I esteem her, I reverence her, I adore her.' Others, if none more contemptible and licentious than the witty abbé, have the same feeling.

Horace Walpole calls her his director, his confessor, the embodiment of common-sense. To be censured by the Sorbonne or shut up in the Bastille for one's violent opinions is almost the only form of folly Madame can't forgive her friends.

Quiet is the chief of her household gods. Speaking to Diderot of a lawsuit that was bothering her: 'Get done with my lawsuit,' says she. 'They want money? I have it. Give them money. What better use can I make of my money than to buy peace with it?'

She does, indeed, make better uses of it even than that. She is the most generous woman in history. It is she who allows Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who has no kind of claim upon her, a pension for life. It is she who pays Poniatowski's debts when he first comes, a young man and a foolish one, to Paris. When she visits her friends, it is her tender pleasure to look round their rooms and see what is wanting to completeness, and afterwards to contribute a piece of old china, a picture, a couch, or a bureau. She has such a delight in giving that he would be surly indeed who could refuse to accept.

To Morellet and to Thomas she makes a sufficient allowance 'pour leur faire une existence indépendante.' How many more of those poor devils of authors who frequent her Salon, and have such very fine notions on life, and so very little idea how to live, she helps from that wide purse and heart, one can only guess.

One Sunday—on Sundays she does not receive her friends—one of them takes her by surprise, and finds her doing up a considerable sum of money in little bags for distribution among the poor. It is her regular Sunday occupation. For here, in evil Paris, with its great gulf fixed between class and class, there are so many sick who need the necessaries—of death—so many orphaned babies, so many despairing women! If Madame, who does ‘good by stealth,’ is convicted of so much kindness, how much more must there be of which no one knows! She is fond of quoting that Eastern proverb, ‘Si tu fais du bien jette-le dans la mer, et si les poissons l’avalent Dieu s’en souviendra;’ and when she is found out in goodness, past denial, excuses herself by saying, with her gay little smile, she has only ‘l’humeur donnante.’

But she has, indeed, that nobler generosity of soul of which giving is but a small part. It is Madame who first stretches out a hand of friendship to Madame Necker, whom as yet the other women won’t accept. And it is Madame who remains her friend when the Necker, who is, besides, young and handsome, presides over a dangerously successful rival Salon. It is Madame Geoffrin who is, in brief, beloved of women, though she is also beloved of men; who cannot bear the false change of compliments, eulogy, flattery, and clings instead to the frank affection of that generous youth to whom, as to childhood, all men are equal and all the world seems kind.

There is no prettier picture than that Madame herself draws, with her natural illiterate pen, in one of the letters to Stanislas. Among her closest friends are a troop of laughing girls, who come and take her by surprise when they want to be amused. It is not, one sees here, volatile youth that is to cheer old age, but this gently gay old age (‘Mon cœur n’a que vingt ans,’ says Madame) which is to make youth merrier yet. One may imagine the scene. They cluster round her, chattering and impulsive. They are so light-hearted and demonstrative, so eager to make confidences, so susceptible of influence! They have come to stay *ever* so long. They must insist on having supper with her—on spending the lengthiest and gayest of evenings. At their head is a girlish Madame d’Egmont—twenty years old at the most—who is quite irresistible, says Madame, when she looks up into one’s face and talks, and who has ‘a grace and vivacity which neither sculpture nor painting shall portray.’ The description of her is so charming that Stanislas wants her portrait. She dies, poor soul! in the sequel, still only a girl, and childless. On that evening

death and disaster must seem far enough off. For Madame, though she is old and has suffered, has the supreme unselfishness which communicates all its joys and keeps its sorrows to itself. She laughs with her visitors, and scolds them tenderly after her fashion—‘I scold them on the way they waste their youth,’ she says, ‘and preach to them that they may have an old age as bright and healthy as mine’—and gives them, perhaps, that sententious little maxim, at which they all laugh delightfully at the moment, and think over a little afterwards: ‘There are three things that the women of Paris throw out of the window—their time, their health, and their money.’

Is it not a pretty, natural little scene in the coarse, clever, artificial drama of this French eighteenth century? Madame Geoffrin is in her own person a witness to the quiet good that always lives on through the worst periods of noisy vice. She should be remembered for ever, if only as the type and voice of those silent multitudes who follow duty in the basest age, and in the teeth of a low public opinion struggle towards ideals not mean.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

'In the Execution of his Duty.'

IT was a sweltering morning, and the huge buttressed cotton-woods surrounding the outpost station rose ghostlike through drifting mist, which hid the forests behind them, when Lieutenant Urmiston lay propped up on the pillows of his canvas couch. Overwork, anxiety, and climatic suffering had aged him beyond his years and worn his face into deep hollows, while there was a look of utter weariness in the eyes that glittered with fever. Through the open casement drifted the warm spicy smell of the forest, a creeper-choked wilderness of eternal twilight, inhabited by devils, the natives said, and lately thrashed for weeks together by the tropical deluge. The room was beaded with damp; negro voices chattered somewhere below; while a curious oppressive feeling in the atmosphere, the height of the thermometer, and the legions of insect pests would have shown that this was a typical outpost in the steamy bush of Western Africa.

A tall man in yellow uniform, whose regular features, straighter hair, and soldier-like bearing proved that, in spite of his colour, he was not of pure negro race, stood listening respectfully while Urmiston with some difficulty gave him orders for the day. He was a sergeant of the Houssas, dusky Moslem from the hinterland, who with the blood of ancient Moor and Arab mingling with that of the mysterious Fellatah and bush tribes in their veins came south, cattle thieves, oppressed cultivators of the soil, and the sons of petty emirs, to serve the British. A firm and judicious hand is needed to hold these free lances of the north who seek to serve the strongest master, and his friends at home would have been surprised to learn that the unobtrusive quietly spoken Urmiston, whose usual reserve hid a depth of dogged courage and endurance, was a hero of theirs. With a handful of them he was expected to maintain peace, uphold the white rulers' prestige, and put down fetich murder through leagues of unhealthy bush, and he did his utmost to accomplish it, wearing out mind and body in the process.

A Government surgeon, who had travelled many miles to visit him, lounged close by watching the pair with disapproval until he said irritably, 'I suppose it's no use me saying that you will suffer for this, Urmiston. Any reasonable man would lie still and forget his business at your temperature. Well, you'll break down utterly some day, and, if it was not that I liked you in spite of your obstinacy, I would wash my hands of you.'

'No, I am afraid it is useless,' was the answer, and the ghost of a smile flickered in the officer's eyes. 'You see, my district is in a most unsettled state, and if I let go just now there would be bloodshed before anyone took hold again. I am trying to suppress the instigators to another rising, and when that is settled there will be plenty of time to rest.'

So the sergeant answered questions, and the surgeon frowned, until a clamour commenced in the compound, as a native messenger came running in. With shaking fingers Urmiston opened the letter he brought, read it over twice, and then with slow deliberation rose up from his sick-bed, and bade a dusky servant bring in his uniform. The sergeant went out hurriedly, the call of a bugle rang across the steaming forest, and in answer to the surgeon's indignant questions Urmiston said, 'The southern tribes have broken out again. Lismore's hemmed in without provisions, and has sent for me. If they once disarm or murder him all the rest will join in.'

'You are not fit to travel even, much less to fight,' was the answer; 'I warn you it will be suicide if you go;' and Urmiston answered grimly, 'It will be manslaughter if I stay. Lismore and the other men are starving, too. Everybody is sick in this country, and, as you should know, nothing would be done here if each man made it his chief business to protect his health.'

So, abandoning further remonstrance, the surgeon made ready to return to his own station, where he was badly needed, and Urmiston was helped into his hammock, where he lay with one foot in the stirrup, haggard in face and wasted in limb, a skeleton in khaki, inspecting his men, while the forest soldiers listened to what he told them, with approval. The bushmen had probably built stockades across their path—that was all the better, they said to each other. They had a long-standing account to settle with those bush heathen for comrades stalked and shot or treacherously poisoned, and under their white leader's guidance they had already taken such stockades in the rear, a manoeuvre which when successful is bad for the defenders. Besides, the dusky aliens had

a blind confidence in the man who rarely lost his temper and was ready with some fresh expedient in each case of emergency, that touched the choleric surgeon, who said—

'I believe, Urmiston, these brigands would go anywhere with you, right through to the Nile, if you wanted them. Well, it's an errand of mercy, and I wish you God-speed, if you must go.'

The black sergeant gave an order, there was a tramp of naked feet in the muddy compound, the line of men in uniform, and woolly-haired bearers clad in almost nothing at all, opened out; then, with a flash of sunlight on rifle barrels and the hammock lurching before it, vanished into the shadows of the forest. A march through the tangled bush of the tropics when lately beaten by roaring deluge is beyond the powers of adequate description, and even to the sick man, who was used to such things, it passed like a nightmare. For hours together they plodded ankle-deep in mire down narrow trails which wound in and out among the giant cotton-woods, with ropes of thorny creepers drooping from them and interlacing foliage shutting out the light of day. Then there were swollen rivers to be forded under blinding heat, and swamps where the grass grew neck-high to be floundered through, while the villages were deserted at their approach, and now and then some one hidden among the undergrowth fired broken cast iron at them from his flintlock gun.

All day Urmiston lay still in his hammock trying to suppress each sign of pain, and, wrapped in waterproof, leaned his aching shoulders against a cotton-wood trunk at night, with the pungent smoke of damp wood drifting about him, considering the tidings his scouts brought in. At times the acrid vapour, which irritated eyes and nostrils, almost choked him, but it was better than the swarming mosquitoes, and he had learned to disregard small discomforts. At last, towards sunset, one day of unusually trying heat, when no breath of moving air entered the dim shade and the dense oppressive atmosphere was thick with mingled savours of wet earth and rotten leaves, Urmiston, aching with the pain which accompanies the fever in his back and limbs, plodded stiffly erect down the sloppy trail at the head of his men. The hammock had been sent to the rear now, for from terrified fugitives lurking in the bush they had discovered that the beleaguered garrison was hard pressed, and the natives, having news of their approach, had built a stockade across the road. This should lie somewhere close ahead, and there was need for caution.

On either side, flanked by angular buttresses of living wood,

rose the mighty trees. Ropes of thorns and an undergrowth, which seemed freely garnished with hooks and spikes, filled each space between, and Urmiston, glancing about him with bloodshot eyes, could see that here an army of bearers with mat-chets would be needed before they could make any attempt at outflanking the stockade. So, trusting to force his way through by stubborn valour or resourceful wit, he held on, and the tired soldiers growled to one another as they followed him. Then, as the light grew fainter, a scout came running back with news, and passing a bend in the trail, the little party stood fast before the stockade. Fallen trees and stakes laced with creepers stretched across the muddy road, great branches overhanging them, and an endless colonnade of giant trunks behind, but save for an odd glimpse of projecting gun-barrels, some of them galvanised, there was neither sound nor sign of life about it. Perhaps they came sooner than the watchers expected, or the latter were cunningly hidden to entrap them, for the breastwork rose before them silent and grim.

Urmiston gave an order, there was a click of bayonet sockets over rifle muzzles, and the black soldiers vanished among the trees, while the white man walking forward, alone save for one coloured interpreter who was singularly loath to go, stood before the stockade, a gaunt and wasted figure about which the thin uniform hung as it were a frame, with a face that was seamed with lines of pain, and great beads of perspiration dewing his forehead. Afterwards the Houssa sergeant would often tell how he watched his officer standing with left knee bent, one hand laid lightly on the revolver butt, as though inspecting his men at drill, though no one knew better that sudden death was hanging over him. Still, Urmiston had learned that in any negotiations with recalcitrant natives an assumption of reckless fearlessness is a factor in the game.

'Who bars this road through the forest in defiance of the law?' the black interpreter rendered his master's message into the bush tongue. 'In the name of the Government I demand a passage,' and then the silence that hung over the forest was rudely broken.

Somebody laughed scornfully, there was a rustling behind the stockade, and woolly heads rose above it, while more gun-barrels were thrust through the interstices. 'The white man is mad or foolish,' a derisive voice said. 'If he will give us all those bush thieves' guns, and the carriers, we may let him pass through.'

But we cannot hear; let him come forward while we send one to talk to him.'

A black man wearing a red tennis jacket round his shoulders like a dolman above a ragged tunic with plated buttons stood up among the branches of a fallen cotton-wood, and there was a growl from the soldiers as they recognised him. This was a well-known scourge of the bush, who had stripped the tunic from a murdered comrade, and wore it in each foray as a defiance to them. Then, when he beckoned, Urmiston, with one hand, which was needed there, on the interpreter's shoulder, moved forward, and the soldiers, slipping from trunk to trunk, stealthily followed him, for, as their sergeant said, 'It is not wise to trust a bushman, and we knew he was going to his death if there was treachery.'

Urmiston doubtless fully recognised this too, but he counted personal danger as little if the result might justify the risk, and had won more than one bloodless victory by an exhibition of what appeared to be unreasoning rashness, and was not so. The bushman leaned down from among the branches, and the pair stood facing each other at some twenty yards' distance, the white man speaking sternly, though what he demanded none of his followers knew, until a thin red flash blazed out from the breast-work followed by a squibbing of bad trade powder, and a charge of broken cast-iron struck spurts of mud from the trail. Whether this was part of a deliberate plan, or the individual effort of some irresponsible bush robber who was proud of his marksmanship, did not appear, but in any case the negro is dangerously fond of firearms, and when one started the rest joined in.

So log and trunk were marked by sputtering trains of sparks, and streaked with drifting smoke, there was a crash of overloaded flintlock guns, and though the negroes' aim is always wild the black interpreter went down shrieking. It had all happened in a few seconds, and the light was almost gone, but there was still enough to show the white man, who had moved a few paces back, turn suddenly round, and, calling aloud, stoop over his black servant. What he said was drowned in a burst of aimless firing, but the black soldiers needed no order, for a moment later he lurched limply forward, and fell with the revolver flung out of his hand face downwards in the trampled mire. Wild men almost naked, with matchets or spears, sprang from the stockade, but they checked their race towards the fallen, for, with a deep-throated howl of wrath startling the forest and sinewy hands clenched on the rifle-stocks, a score of dusky men in muddy

uniform swept towards them. Some of the assailants had seen those snaky bayonets at work, others had heard the tale, and they did not wait for that deadly rush of steel. But the fire from behind the logs continued, and when the sergeant raised his officer ragged potleg was whirring everywhere, and an exultant shouting broke out, as another soldier turning caught at his side and then collapsed into a quivering heap.

The sergeant roared out sharp orders, some one assisted him in the lift, and, with three limp forms carried among them, the little party moved back into the friendly gloom among the trunks, neither apparently did any of the bushmen think it judicious to follow them. Groaning a little, Urmiston asked for his hammock, and when he had been lifted into it, wiping a red froth from his lips, he said in the native tongue, 'I am hardly hit; this is our last march together, Karanah. But raise me in the hammock, there, with my shoulder higher; now give me the pistol, that the others may not know. So, and because starving men will perish unless I bring them help, I may not wait for death while there is work in haste to do. Alive or dead, I am your leader; we will sweep that stockade, then you will carry me into Lismore's camp. Now tear down the awning that all may see me.'

Karanah rent the plaited palm leaf aside, and if it was too dark for the rest to note the curious greyness that crept across their master's face they could recognise him by his voice and attitude, as in words that came very slowly with a gasp between he spoke to them. Then the big dusky alien bent down that the thin hand of the white man might touch his head, and when a deep growl rose up from those behind him said, 'That is their answer. I, who serve the Prophet, am an emir's son, but because of the oath, and because we have never found such a leader, I am the white officer's slave. So, with his hand upon my neck, I promise to do his bidding, and, living or dead, we will carry him into the camp in spite of the heathen.'

'It is well,' said Urmiston faintly, and that was the last his followers ever heard him say. The fire from the logs, which had slackened, ceased altogether, though a haze of acrid smoke still hung heavily in the air, when in ominous silence a line of half-seen men moved out from the gloom of the cotton-woods into the trail again. They bore three hammocks with them, two of which swayed behind, but, in spite of the carriers' protests, one went before, and in it the form of Lieutenant Urmiston was dimly visible. There

was stillness in the forest save for a chatter of voices among the undergrowth and the soft patter of naked feet, until some one cried in warning, and once more the front of the breastwork was flecked with flame. Lighted momentarily by the fitful flashes, black men with matchets and others ramming home the potleg down long flintlock guns swarmed about it, but none were skilful with the latter weapon, and now thick darkness had closed down.

There was neither shot nor answer from the men behind the hammock. They had long served a master who, when it was necessary to strike, struck hard in silence. Beside, they could see his hammock, and no one gave an order until the sergeant Karanah cried aloud. Then a wild hoarse shout went up, the hammock bearers panted as they commenced to run, and with a sudden rush of trampling feet the men from the north came on. Into the smoke, and through it, they went, flintlocks squibbing before them, and a confused din, the thudding of ramrods, crash of flung-up branches, and clink of matchets, growing louder about the breastwork, until savage and breathless they reached the obstacle.

Fire blew in their faces, erratic humming potleg whistled past, but it did not stop them, for while the rifle-butts fell thudding on each weaker spot and the bayonets flickered in the light of torches above, dragged hither and thither by many hands, the hammock was forced up, and over the fallen cotton-woods. Then there was a sudden explosion of bad powder, probably some fibre-cased bag, an evanescent column of flame which glinted redly on the bayonets, and afterwards a sound of fugitives smashing through the bush in headlong flight—and the stockade was won. Branches were flung down, heavy logs rolled aside, the bearers marched through the gap, bringing more loaded hammocks with them now, and presently the sergeant stood, a stately smoke-grimed figure beside the fibre net in which his master lay.

'We have obeyed the order, and the way is open. The bushmen have fled,' he said, but there was no answer from the hammock, and when some one brought a torch he called out sharply, and, regardless of discipline, the rest gathered round. Urmiston lay very still within, grimly clutching a revolver in his wasted hand, with two dark smears on his well-worn tunic, and a stamp there was no mistaking upon his pallid face. Then a hush fell upon all who saw him; even the heathen carriers ceased their wondering chatter, for each man knew that Lieutenant Urmiston had led his alien

soldiers victorious to his last attack, until the big sergeant raised his voice and said, 'That was a man to follow, and had he bidden us, we would even have gone down into the place of the last infidel after him.' Then standing stiffly erect with one hand raised in salute, he added: 'Peace be with you—master; still we obey the order. He was a brave man, though an infidel, and Allah is merciful.'

The carriers settled the hammock-poles upon their woolly heads, the tramp of feet recommenced, and in sullen wrath the little party vanished into the gloom of the forest, while it was well for the bush tribesmen that they did not rally to dispute the way with them. Perhaps the story of how they had passed the stockade travelled faster than their march, or the besiegers had news of a relief force coming from the south, for when long after midnight they neared the beleaguered outpost there was only a feeble resistance. A few flintlocks sputtered harmlessly among the undergrowth, a Martini or two joined in, there was a clamour of negro voices, a sound of hurried flight, and after a sentry's challenge the gate of the compound was opened wide. Then, muddy, footsore, and stained by powder smoke, with red torches blinking about them, amid the shouts of the garrison the black soldiers marched in—a hammock going before them, and more loaded carriers behind.

A gaunt white man with a fouled revolver hanging from his wrist stood in the glare of uncertain light, a young subaltern leaned on a Martini near him, while a handful of men from the hinterland waited a little apart. He started when he noticed the reversed rifles, but something in the dusky soldiers' faces held him silent, until striding towards the hammock he said, 'Sergeant, what is it?' Then raising his battered helmet he stepped back, saying hoarsely, 'Good Lord! He is dead.'

'Yes,' said the alien soldier, standing beside the lowered hammock. 'Our officer was stricken badly before the stockade, but he made us promise to follow him until we brought the food and cartridges into your compound gate. And, because we loved him, we kept our promise. Now the carriers are bringing their loads in. This is how it happened.'

'Poor fellow,' said the commander of the outpost when the tale was done, 'and he was an only son! Well, such things will happen, and when my time comes may I be worthy of the same funeral. Still, Corlett, I wish some other man had the task of explaining matters to his father. Sergeant, carry him into the armoury yonder. Choose two of those who served him best to

stand guard over him, then fall out the rest. You have done well.'

So until the red dawn came, the commander of the outpost sat soaked in perspiration, writing and rewriting one letter among others under an evil-smelling kerosene lamp, while all that was left of Lieutenant Urmiston, who had escaped from the pains of fever and the eternal twilight of the bush, lay in state in the armoury, with two aliens who served the Prophet standing motionless like statues in ochre and ebony keeping watch over him.

One of the despatches written that night brought bitter sorrow mingled with pride to a white-haired Englishman, who sat staring at it with dimmed eyes, until after many times reading the last line, 'He did his work thoroughly and well, and I know no one in the service quite fit to fill his difficult post,' he said brokenly, 'My only son! Still, he has done great things out there, and I must not grudge him.'

The old man presently followed his son to his rest, but under a coloured window in an English church which stands among cool green meadows and ancient elms, a brass tablet bears the inscription: 'In memory of Reginald Urmiston, killed in Western Africa in the execution of his duty.' Also, far off in the shadows of the dripping forest, when the blue wood smoke drifts about the drowsy camp, a black sergeant tells the story of how the dead man led those who trusted him across the stockade.

HAROLD BINDLOSS.

A Transport Cruise to the Cape in 1795.¹

IN the account of the 'Capture of Capetown'² graphically drawn from Sir John Malcolm's manuscript, Mr. George Paston tells us of the first small expedition sent grudgingly out by His Majesty's Government, in the beginning of the year 1795, to make the earliest British bid for supremacy at the Cape. And—reinforcements being urgently needed by this small pioneer force—he further tells us of the despatch, later in the same year, of a body of 3,000 men, under General Sir Alured Clarke (with young Malcolm as his aide-de-camp) to its assistance.

These 3,000 troops, sent out in a fleet of thirteen East India-men, arrived, so the story goes, but just in time to rescue General Craig and his very insufficient force from an extremely critical position.

Sir John Malcolm's story begins with the landing of the troops and military stores; it may not, however, be uninteresting at the present time, when the transport of our troops to the same place has occupied so much of our attention, to glance for a moment at a few small particulars attending this transportation voyage of young Malcolm and 3,000 British troops, over a hundred years ago.

The incidents recorded of the voyage are perhaps too slight to do more than cast a side-light on the transport of the time; they are gathered, however, at first hand from a little account written some fifty years afterwards (for the amusement of his grandson) by an officer of the Company's ship *Kent*, one of the East India squadron of thirteen engaged in the expedition.

¹ The particulars of this cruise to the Cape are selected and adapted from a short narrative of his nautical life by Mr. John Marshall. The little memoir was published between fifty and sixty years ago. Some twenty years after his youthful voyage to the Cape, Mr. Marshall was appointed by the Home Government President of the Government Bank at Capetown: an appointment he held for a number of years.

² LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, October, 1900.

The voyage is mentioned as a rapid one. It took the Company's ships, however, as many months to accomplish as our modern ships take weeks; and it included a seven days' sojourn *en route* (!) at San Salvador, a course not in an Admiralty programme now.

Delays, to an extent hardly realisable in these days, attended a vessel then, not only through her voyages, but also in her fitting-out; indeed, it has been said that a ship's captain of that time never was at rest, for he only left the exigencies of his life afloat to find equally embarrassing exigencies awaiting him in port. The most serious and anxious cause of a ship's unwilling detention then in port was the shocking naval impress system, which prevailed more or less until the end of the great French wars. The *Kent* and her sister East India Company ships, although actually engaged in the transport of Government troops, narrowly escaped being incapacitated for this very voyage through this iniquitous system. It was indeed greatly owing to the determination of the *Kent's* gallant crew to resist impress at all costs that the vessel was enabled to make the voyage in time to carry the support needed for the conquest of Cape Colony.

The episode of the crew's resistance to the press-gang is thus described:

Early in March 1795, the *Kent* was at anchor in Long Reach, a few miles above Gravesend, in company with several other Indiamen, all busily preparing for the reception of about 3,000 troops, which were destined to assist in the expedition for the capture of the Cape of Good Hope. A frigate was observed to be at anchor about a mile further down the river; and it had been intimated, early in the morning, to the *Kent's* crew that she was actively engaged in pressing men, and that a visit to the *Kent* might be expected in the course of the day. The ship's company, after conferring together, unanimously resolved that they would not be taken out of the ship by force, and took their measures accordingly.

A deputation of them waited on the commanding officer, and, having apprised him of the resolution they had come to, requested that he would be pleased to let them have the key of the arm-chest, in order that they might make use of the arms in their own defence in the event of any attempt being made to drag them out of the ship. The officer, of course, declining to accede to their request, was respectfully informed by them that they had then no alternative but to break open the chest, though with the utmost reluctance on their part. The chest was accordingly broken open, the arms taken out, and ammunition procured from the maga-

zine. This, together with the muskets, boarding-pikes &c., was taken down into the hold, where a sort of *chevaux de frise* was constructed around the main hatchway; the boarding-pikes and loaded muskets pointing upwards. The fore and after hatches were next laid on and secured; a fire was lighted on the ballast, and the cooking utensils, chests, and hammocks were taken below. There being an abundance of water, wood, and provisions in the hold, the crew now considered themselves sufficiently prepared for a siege.

Scarcely had these precautionary measures been completed, when a boat from the frigate was observed to be approaching the *Kent*. Instantly all hands with the exception of the officers darted into the hold. The boat was rowed alongside, a lieutenant made his appearance on deck, and, addressing himself to the commanding officer, said: 'I am come, sir, from His Majesty's frigate, for the purpose of mustering your ship's company; will you be so good, therefore, as to give the necessary directions for that purpose?'

The commanding officer, aware of the object of his visit, replied by informing him of what had taken place, adding that he had in consequence no control over his men. He entreated him, however, before he proceeded to extremities, to cast his eye into the main hold, and judge for himself whether it would be prudent in him, with only his boat's crew, to force his way among a number of men so well prepared for resistance, and so determined, as they appeared to be, not to be coerced. The lieutenant accordingly did cast his eye into the hold; he shook his head significantly, bowed to the commanding officer, dropped into his boat, and returned to the frigate.

Within less than an hour from the lieutenant's departure the frigate was seen to be under way and steering towards the *Kent*, abreast of which she anchored within pistol-shot. The captain hailed, and asked if the ship's crew were now willing to submit to their being mustered by an officer from his ship.

He was answered by a deputy from the hold with a simple negative. Upon this the captain was observed to take out his watch, and in an audible voice he informed the refractory crew that he would give them ten minutes to consider of it, and if at the expiration of that time they did not consent to be mustered, he should sink them.

The deputy replied: 'You will do as you think proper, sir; but we have already made up our minds on the subject.'

Ten minutes elapsed but not a shot was fired, and no further steps were taken to bring pressure on the crew.

It was said a few days afterwards an order was received from the Admiralty, that all the men who had been pressed by the frigate from the several ships engaged to carry troops to the Cape, should be restored to their respective ships forthwith; and it was further rumoured that the order was accompanied by a severe reprimand to the captain for his conduct. Not long after this disagreeable affair the ships proceeded to Portsmouth, where they remained a considerable time waiting for the troops and for convoy.

During this long waiting time at Portsmouth, the young officer of the *Kent* (from whose story I draw these few particulars) amused himself with watching the assembling, at Spithead, of a large fleet of men-of-war which was to sail with the East India fleet for various destinations. While engaged scrutinising the several ships one day, he relates that he was witness of an awful sight—viz. the entire destruction of one of them.

From the quarter gallery and stern of a fine three-decker anchored there he noticed suddenly a volume of flame rush up, whose progress he watched with intense interest. His account of this terrible sight is short and graphic: 'I perceived,' he says, 'the flames rapidly advancing from the stern forward, spreading throughout the ship, ascending the masts, and rushing out of every port. I saw masts and yards falling one after the other, until scarcely any part remained standing beside the bare hull.

'The guns—most of which were shotted and could not be unloaded—discharged themselves successively as the flames approached, thus adding to the sublime effect of this awful spectacle.

'Several of the shots reached the Motherbank, striking one of the ships and killing one of her crew, whilst others struck ships at Spithead, and more lives were lost.

'The sea around the ship was covered with boats, aiding in the preservation of her crew as they jumped overboard; such being the rapidity of the flames that every effort to check them proved fruitless, notwithstanding fire-engines from every man-of-war at Spithead and from the dockyards were playing on her at once.

'At length,' so the account runs, 'I observed the guardship, the old *Royal William*, which was moored in her wake, to be under way (for the first time, as it was said, within twenty

years), evidently in order to remove to a place of safety, lest the wreck should drift on board of her—a timely precaution, as, on the flames reaching the hawse-holes, and rushing along the cables, she parted, and drifted over the very spot where the old *Royal William* had been moored, from whence she continued to drift until she struck the ground and blew up.

‘She proved to be the *Boyne*, of 90 guns, one of the finest ships in the British Navy.’

Whilst in Portsmouth Harbour, the *Kent*, being still short-handed, the crew was reinforced by some thirty French sailors from the French vessel *Commerce de Marseille*. The *Commerce de Marseille*, so the narrative tells, was one of the ships handed over to the English upon the evacuation of Toulon by the Royalists. She was said to be constructed to carry 130 guns, though she never had more than 120 mounted, and was, next to the *Santissima Trinidad*, probably the largest ship ever before built.

The crew of the *Commerce de Marseille* on her arrival in England were, of course, not treated as prisoners of war; they were Royalists, and as such were allowed to go and do what they pleased. Many entered our merchant service, and the thirty that shipped on board the *Kent* were cordially welcomed there.

French sailors were not then considered—by ourselves at least—to be on a par with our own in point of seamanship or in other respects; our young officer, however, states that those who shipped with him were among the most expert, active, and orderly sailors in the ship.

The troops being at last embarked—it was now the middle of May—the ships set sail with the large fleet that had been collecting off Spithead, and which was bound for the Mediterranean, the West Indies, and other parts of the world. Off Cadiz the thirteen East Indiamen parted company with the warships, proceeding on their voyage to the Cape in charge only of a sloop of war, ‘according,’ so we are told, ‘to the absurd practice of those days, of giving much the same sort of convoy to a fleet of Indiamen as to a fleet of colliers.’

Our officer congratulated himself, however, that they had no reason to complain of the ‘brave little commodore’ under whom they sailed, and by whose orders on reaching the coast of Brazil, they spent a week in San Salvador—*alias* the Bay of All Saints—in all probability a week very agreeably spent, for he mentions the procuring of water and refreshments through the day, and the

excitement of smuggling through the night—‘an irresistible temptation to those who had anything for sale that could not be landed in any other way, such as broadcloth, large quantities of which were at midnight huddled out of the ports in exchange for gold!’

The signal for sailing bringing this not very reputable traffic to a close, they took their departure, not without regret, from this beautiful and commodious bay.

In this apparently rather uneventful voyage, one untoward accident, however, happened. On the morning after their departure from San Salvador, whilst working off the coast with a stiff breeze, the ‘brave little *Commodore*’ had her foremast carried away by running foul of one of the ships, the *Exeter*, a China ship of 1,200 tons. The accident was caused by a misunderstanding as to which ship was to bear up for the other. The *Exeter*, thinking that, as she was on the right tack, according to immemorial usage, the *Commodore* would give way; whilst the *Commodore* concluded that the *Exeter* under any circumstances would bear up for a man-of-war. How this point of etiquette was ultimately settled our young officer did not know; but in the meantime the *Commodore* had to return to San Salvador in tow of the *Exeter*, and the rest of the convoy had to find their way to the Cape as best they could.

I give the few paragraphs relating to the ships’ arrival at Capetown in the officer’s own words, as they corroborate so strongly Sir John Malcolm’s account of the extreme acceptability of their appearance to the little force awaiting them:

‘On our arrival in Simon’s Bay, we found there Admiral Elphinstone with his squadron of men-of-war, and Major-General Sir James Craig with his troops in rather a desperate position, as they had not a sufficient force to make head against the Dutch, who were threatening to become the assailants.

‘Our troops had been so long waiting for reinforcements that their store of provisions, &c., was nearly expended; and the question had just been mooted whether the expedition should be abandoned altogether, unless the expected reinforcement should arrive in the course of a few days.

‘Nothing, then, could have been more opportune than our arrival; nor could anything have placed in a stronger light the impolicy of those extraordinary proceedings which took place in Long Reach; for if the frigate had succeeded in her object of stripping the India fleet of all their best men, our departure from England must have been so much retarded that our arrival

in Simon's Bay would probably have been too late, and this valuable colony would have been lost to Great Britain; all the money expended upon two expeditions fitted out for its capture would have been thrown away; and the country might have been disheartened for a long time to come from undertaking any further projects of the kind.

'Our welcome arrival, however, changed the whole face of affairs. An immediate advance to Cape Town was arranged, and preparations were made accordingly for that purpose.

'A large body of sailors from the men-of-war had been trained to the use of the musket, in order to co-operate with the military on shore. And now, fifty men from each India ship, under the command of an officer and a midshipman, with one of the commanders at their head, volunteered their services in dragging the artillery up the hills and along the rugged roads leading to Cape Town.

'Two of the China ships were sent round to Table Bay as a demonstration; and upon their departure from Simon's Bay the troops commenced their march, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Alured Clarke.

'At Wynberg some faint resistance was offered by the Dutch, and this battle, if it may be so called, was followed by a treaty for the immediate surrender of the colony.'

A characteristic incident mentioned of the boatswain's-mate of the *Kent* may not be uninteresting to some who have followed the ship's fortunes so far. After the termination of hostilities this man, who was one of the volunteers ashore, returned to Simon's Town, and in roving about in search of plunder found his way into a cellar filled with casks of the most delicious wine. In his delight at this prize he fancied himself, as he said, 'in Heaven.' The poor fellow was dreadfully puzzled, however, how to dispose of the wine. To drink it all, or to carry it away with him, was equally impracticable; to leave it behind for the enemy to drink, a thing not to be thought of. He resolved at length to take the largest cask for his own drinking, and to set the rest running about the floor. The latter operation was easily performed, but in attempting to carry the cask away he fell senseless to the ground. He was found in this predicament by some of his comrades, who, thinking to do him good, carried him out of the cellar, and hung him up by the heels to the branch of a tree, that the wine might run out of his mouth, as it went in. On finding this experiment ineffectual, and thinking he was dead,

they cut him down and abandoned him to his fate. Nature did, however, for poor Jack more than his comrades could, and he recovered himself and returned to camp.

The objects for which it had touched at the Cape being accomplished, the fleet now set sail for China *via* Madras. The latter part of the voyage was not without excitement. At Madras 500 native troops with stores and provisions were hurriedly shipped, by Government orders, for a secret expedition, and as quickly disembarked again on account of sudden troubles there. In passing through the Straits of Bali, at the eastern extremity of Java, the fleet suddenly found itself in the middle of a whirlpool; the effect of which was exceedingly alarming, as owing to want of wind the rudders were useless, and the ships spun round and round like so many tops. Any collision, under such circumstances, would naturally have been serious. Fortunately, however, the motion being progressive as well as rotary, they all escaped without injury.

Soon after this escapade the fleet sighted Bellambargen, and England being now at war with the Dutch, they anchored off the town, and took nominal possession of it in His Majesty's name. A little later still, while passing the Pellew Islands, they communicated to the natives the intelligence of the death of their King-elect, Prince Le Boo, who had fallen a victim to smallpox in England.

The first part of the voyage, however, is the only part of special interest to us at present. The length of time spent by these East India ships of transport, in making their 'rapid' passage from Portsmouth to the Cape with relief troops, was 110 days; in addition to which more than two months were previously consumed in preparations and in shipping the force. Perhaps the transport of to-day, whatever be its shortcomings, is not the least wonderful transformation wrought during the nineteenth century.

E. M. ORD MARSHALL.

In the Name of a Woman.

BY ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT,

AUTHOR OF 'BY RIGHT OF SWORD,' 'A DASH FOR A THRONE,' &c.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PUSH FOR THE FRONTIER.

'DID you call, General?' asked the captain; and as the voice came through the door I tightened the grip on my prisoner and pressed the barrel of the revolver harder against his head.

He hesitated, and when no answer was given the question was repeated.

'Yes,' said Kolfort, in an unsteady tone.

'Shall I come in? Is anything the matter?' and I felt the door pushed from the outside.

'No,' in the same unsteady tone. 'No, I—I do not need you. You will take your men back to my house and—and wait for instructions.'

'And the prisoner, General? Shall we take her with us?'

'Tell him she has killed herself,' I whispered.

'There is no prisoner to take, Captain Berschoff. She has—has taken her own life. Leave that to me. Withdraw your men and send my carriage up to the door here for me.'

'Very good, General. Is that all?'

'Yes, that's all.' The words came with a sigh of relief. I shut the door immediately, and we stood in the dark, near the window which the two officers had broken to get into the house, and listened as the captain walked quickly to the gates. Then came a word of command, followed by the scraping of the carriage wheels on the drive, and the sounds of the soldiers' horses and the rattle of their accoutrements as they wheeled away along the road.

So far all was going well, and the crisis I feared had passed safely. The carriage drew up outside the door.

'Remember where to tell him to drive, Kutscherf,' I said sternly. 'You have half earned your life, but you must go through with it.' I opened the door, linked my arm in his, and led him down the steps, and together we entered the carriage. He gave his order to the coachman through the window, and a moment later we started, turned out of the gates, and rattled along at a brave pace for the frontier.

General Kolfort fell back on the seat and pressed his hands to his face, as though dizzy and weak with the long tension of fear, and partly, I judged, ashamed of himself for his cowardice.

'You had better try to sleep, General,' I said; 'we have a long drive. I shall be on watch, and shall not need to disturb you unless we stumble across any of your troublesome patrols.'

This was indeed my one source of fear now, and I leant back thinking how we should deal with them in the event of interference. The General's presence would probably make everything smooth enough, but there was always a chance that an opportunity would be given for him to try some trick to elude me.

We had at least sixty miles to drive, and as it was now past midnight I reckoned we could not reach the frontier until between seven and eight in the morning. It would be sunrise by five, and there would be thus at least two or three hours to drive in daylight. That would be the time of chief danger.

It was a bright, fine night, the moon had risen, and when we had cleared the town I resolved to urge the driver to quicken the pace of his horses. I let down the window, and the cool night air came rushing in and roused my companion, who sat up quickly.

'What is the matter?'

'Nothing; I wish your man to travel faster.' I leant out and called to him:

'The General says you are to drive faster; at a gallop where possible.' He did not hear me at first, and was for checking the horses, until I shouted the order to him again. I drew in my head, and was only just in the nick of time to avoid trouble.

The General had opened the door on his side and, in his desperation, was in the very act of springing out. I caught hold of him, dragged him back, and shut the door again. He fell in a heap huddled up at my feet.

'A very dangerous leap for a man of your age,' I said drily. 'I have probably saved your life, for the second time to-night,'

and I lifted him up on to the seat of the carriage again. 'And now, understand me, if you had got out, I would have sprung out after you and shot you in the highway, had it cost me my life. I thought that you would understand by now that I'm in too dangerous a mood for you to fool with. But I'm glad of the hint you've given me, and I sha'n't forget it for the rest of the way.'

He made no answer, but lay back on the seat as before, and I did not attempt to rouse him. The incident disquieted me, for it showed that he was dead set on outwitting me, and would do so if I relaxed for a single second the strain of his terror of my pistol.

The carriage was now travelling at a great pace, the man urging the horses to a gallop over every yard of level road. We reached the first village without further incident, and I told the man where to get the change of horses. There was a little delay in rousing the people of the place, but once roused they set to work with a will, and in a very few minutes we were spinning on again with the fresh cattle at the same high speed for the next stage.

Markov had done his work shrewdly, and had planned the route so that for the greater part of the way we travelled without having to use the main road. But the by-ways were rough going in many places, and this retarded our progress. We made good time, however, and when we changed horses for the second, third, and fourth times without being stopped, my hopes began to rise fast that we might even reach the frontier unchallenged. We had covered over forty miles, and yet, including the time spent in changing horses, we had barely been four hours on the road.

A check came soon after the fourth change, however. We had to take to the main road, and had covered some two or three miles, when I heard a shout and felt the carriage checked suddenly.

'Who goes there?' called someone, and looking out I saw we were in the midst of a strong patrol.

'You'd better not stop us. I'm driving express. It's General Kolfort,' came the coachman's voice.

I caught my breath, and my prisoner roused himself instantly and sat up. I passed my arm round him and, pressing the revolver against his ribs over his heart from behind, I said:

'You will tell these men to allow us to pass. My pistol is within an inch of your heart, and my finger on the trigger.' I

felt him shudder. 'Let that window down, and call to them angrily. You know me.'

He let it down, fumbling clumsily, so that with my disengaged hand I had to help him.

The non-commissioned officer in charge of the patrol had dismounted and came to the window.

'What do you mean by stopping me? Don't you know who I am, blockhead?' cried the General, his teeth chattering with chill and fright.

'My orders are imperative, to stop all travellers and see their papers,' replied the man as he saluted.

'Well, you've stopped us; that's enough.'

'I must see your papers, if you please,' he said stolidly.

'Do you suppose the General writes passes for himself?' I broke in.

'We have no papers,' cried the General sharply. I saw his motive; he wished to provoke the man to stop us.

'Then you will have to alight,' said the soldier.

'Very well. I suppose there's no help for it;' and as he turned to me the General's face wore an expression half defiant, half cunning. 'I'm not responsible for what these blockheads do,' he said.

'What papers do you want?' I asked, at a loss quite what to do in this new and perplexing turn.

'All travellers this way must carry a permit, or they are to be stopped. Those are my orders.'

'But surely you know General Kolfort?'

'I must see the permit,' he answered doggedly.

'That's easily managed. You can write one, General.'

The man shook his head.

'They must be signed and countersigned,' he returned, with growing suspicion and rising anger.

'The fellow's right,' said the General, turning to me with a laugh. 'It's absurd, but he's right.' His manner enraged me. He was trying all he dared to play into the man's hands.

'I am only obeying orders,' said the sergeant; and for a moment it seemed as if between them I should be fooled. But I knew well enough what short work my prisoner would have made of such an interruption under other circumstances.

'Do you tell me you don't know that this is General Kolfort?' I asked very sternly.

'I am not here to study faces, sir, but to examine permits,' was the blunt blockhead's answer.

'You can at least read, then? And I presume you know the General's handwriting. You shall have an order signed by the General, and one which will need no countersign to ensure its being obeyed. What's your name and regiment? Quick!' I said in a short tone of command.

'Max Pullschoff, sergeant, 3rd Regiment, 2nd Army Corps,' he answered saluting.

'Now, General, order him to allow us to proceed at once at his peril. This fooling has gone far enough,' and I enforced my words with a look of menace, while I pressed the revolver hard against his ribs, and added in a whisper, 'Instantly!'

He hesitated just one instant, trying to nerve himself to defy me, but it was only for the instant.

'I am General Kolfort, and I order you at your peril to delay me no longer.'

'I am very sorry, sir, but my orders are absolute. I can't do it.'

'Write an order to Captain Berschoff that the rascal has mutinied against your authority, General, and that instantly on his return to quarters he is to be imprisoned and flogged for mutiny. We will see then what he says about signatures,' and I took out my pocket-book and gave it him with a pencil.

He glared at me viciously, but the revolver was his master, and he wrote out the order just as I had bade him, and signed it.

'Now, Sergeant Pullschoff, read that, and say whether in the face of it you venture to carry this thing further.'

The man took it, and I saw his face turn deadly white as he read it and scanned the signature closely.

'I have done no more than my duty, General,' he murmured; but I saw that I had beaten him, and I pressed that advantage home.

'If you detain us a minute longer, my man, you will go galloping back to Sofia in custody for that order to be executed. You and your men know perfectly well that this is General Kolfort, and that this is his carriage.'

He stepped away from the carriage window, and I saw him consult with a couple of his men.

'If I break my orders you will hold me harmless, General?'

'Of course we shall. Tell him so, General.'

'Yes,' assented the latter, but very slowly and regretfully, for the new turn of the matter was all against his wishes.

'You can give me back that order,' I said then. 'And I shall make it my business to see that you are commended for your care in carrying out your instructions. Tell the coachman to drive on.'

'Thank you, sir. I wish to do no more,' said the fellow, saluting, as he handed me the paper, and then called to the driver to proceed.

'A very excellent soldier that, very wooden, but human at bottom in his fear for himself,' I said quietly to my prisoner, as we passed the last of the patrols, who all saluted us.

'Curse you!' cried the General, in the bitterness of his chagrin and disappointment.

I laughed; I could afford to now that the danger was passed; and my satisfaction was the more genuine because the danger had been more serious than I had anticipated. Moreover, it suggested to me to take a precaution which I had neglected before starting.

When we drew up for the next change of horses I made my prisoner write me a formal permit to pass all patrols, as being on special service, and I pocketed it for use in case of need. The value of it I had an opportunity of testing within a few minutes, for we were stopped again by another patrol of troops. But I produced the permit this time, and it was accepted without a word of comment.

It was now daylight; and, as we drew near the frontier, my excitement increased. When we changed horses for the last time my spirits were as high as my companion's rage and chagrin were manifest.

In less than an hour I should be across the frontier if all went well; and all had gone so well that it would be a mere superfluity of cowardice to anticipate any serious obstacle now. We had left the main road, and had travelled some four miles through rough hilly cross lanes to the point where Markov had planned for the frontier to be crossed, when I found that the driver was in trouble with the horses. They were going very erratically, now jibbing and plunging in the harness, and again dashing forward at headlong speed. While they galloped I cared nothing, and, though we bumped over the rough roads so violently that my companion could scarcely keep on his seat, and was constantly thrown against me, I was well contented, and laughed. The greater the speed the better it pleased me. But when they stopped, and plunged, and kicked with a violence quite beyond the man's power to control, I was anxious enough.

Then, quite suddenly, came an overwhelming disaster which ruined everything. We had ascended a steep hill at a slow pace, with more than one stoppage, and were descending a slope on the other side, when the horses bolted, and dashed away down it with a frantic fury that threatened to smash us up at almost every stride. The pace was mad enough to frighten a man whose nerves were in far better order than those of my fright-wrought prisoner, and his terror paralysed him.

There was going to be a smash ; and I had scarcely time to realise the certainty of it, and to wonder vaguely how it would affect my escape, when it came. There were a few moments of mad, jolting, dizzying rush down the hill, then a fearful crash as the wheels struck against some heavy obstacle, a wild jerk that threw us both forward in a heap, a noise of smashing glass and rending woodwork, half-a-dozen great lurching bumps and jolts, and the carriage was on its side, dragging, and tearing, and grinding on the rough road, till it stopped, and I found myself lying in its ruins, with my hands and face badly cut and bruised, and every bone in my body, as it seemed, either broken or dislocated. I struggled out of the ruin as best I could, to find the driver and his horses in a heap in the road, the man himself in imminent peril of being kicked to death. I managed to haul him out of danger, and laid him by the roadside unconscious from the effect of his fall, and left the horses to fight it out for themselves while I looked after General Kolfort.

He also was unconscious ; but whether from hurt or fear I could not tell. He lay pinned underneath the carriage, and I had great difficulty in releasing him. But I got him out, and set him beside the coachman, just as one of the horses succeeded in kicking himself free, struggled to his feet, and began backing and tugging to break the reins. I ran to him, patted and soothed him, and then, cutting the reins, I knotted them and fastened him to a tree. I meant him to carry me to the frontier on his back, and was glad to find, when I ran my hands over him, that he had no more serious hurt than a few surface cuts.

But I was in truth vastly puzzled how to act. To take the General with me any further was impossible ; yet to leave him behind might be infinitely dangerous. The instant he recovered consciousness he would set all his wits and malice to work to have me followed ; and my perplexity was vastly increased when I saw about a mile ahead of me a couple of horse-patrols appear on the crest of a hill, and come riding leisurely toward us.

There was no time for hesitation. I realised instantly the impossibility of holding the General in my power by means of threats in the presence of a couple of soldiers in broad daylight. There was infinitely less danger in trusting to flight.

I rushed to the horse, therefore, unfastened him, leapt on his bare back, and set off at a gallop to meet the approaching soldiers. As I glanced back I saw to my dismay that the General had been fooling me with a sham fainting fit, for he had risen to a sitting posture, and was endeavouring to shake the coachman back to his senses.

At this I urged my horse forward, for I knew his next step would be to try and make the soldiers understand that I was to be stopped and secured.

As I galloped I made my plans. Getting within earshot, I called to them to hasten forward, for they had halted, and stood with their carbines ready to stop me.

Reining my horse up as best I could, I said, in a tone of command:

'General Kolfort has met with an accident there, and you are to hasten to his assistance instantly.'

'One moment, if you please, sir. Have you your papers?' asked one of the men.

'Of course I have. I am riding on special service. Here is my permit;' and I showed it to him, not letting it out of my hands, however. He pushed his horse forward and read it.

'It seems all right,' he said.

'Of course it's all right. I am on a matter of life or death, and have to press forward with all speed. I have had to use one of the carriage horses; but one of you had better give me yours. It is an urgent affair of State.'

My tone of authority, added to the permit of urgency with the General's signature, impressed him considerably.

'It's all against orders,' he said, hesitating.

'Do you suppose this won't justify everything?' I cried, shaking the General's order in his face. 'You may find it awkward to refuse. The General will soon put you right. Quick! there's no time to lose;' and, to act my part thoroughly, I slipped off my horse.

He dismounted slowly, and half reluctantly; but the instant his foot touched the ground, I let my horse loose, and, giving him a thrust in the ribs, sent him trotting down the road, while I

seized the bridle of the other and swung into the saddle, before the man had recovered from his astonishment.

Then an exclamation from the second soldier attracted the attention of us both. There was good cause; for, on looking back, I saw that three other horse-soldiers had joined the General, who was making frantic gesticulations to the men with me.

'Ah! he sees me stopping, and wishes me to push on,' I said.

'I think you had better ride back with us, if you please,' said the soldier who had dismounted, and he made a sign to his companion, who was still barring my path, to stop me.

'Nonsense, he wishes me to push on.'

'I can't let you proceed, sir, order or no order,' he answered bluntly, and made as if to seize my horse's bridle, while he ordered his subordinate to prevent my passing.

At the same moment the men with the General fired their carbines to call our attention, and set off towards us at full gallop.

'At least you can wait till those men reach us,' he said, and his tone and face showed his suspicions that something was wrong.

Thus in a moment the position had developed into one of fresh embarrassment and imminent peril for me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RUINED HUT.

THE two soldiers mistook me vastly if they thought I was going to allow myself to be caught in this way like a rat in a trap, when the trap was a mile long, and the door of it guarded so loosely.

I had backed my horse to prevent the man on foot catching hold of the bridle-rein, and, wheeling round swiftly, I plunged my hand into my pocket, drew out my revolver and, before the second soldier could guess my intention, I sent a bullet into his horse's head.

He dropped like a stone, sending his rider flying on to the road, his carbine, which he had levelled at me, going off in the

air as he fell. The other made a rush at me, but I covered him with the pistol.

'How dare you try to stop me on State business?' I cried in a voice of thunder. 'Another step, and I'll blow your brains out.'

He pulled up short enough at that, and I clapped my heels into the horse's flanks, and was off like the wind. He was a good beast, in excellent condition and very fresh, and more than fit to carry me the six miles which I reckoned lay between me and the frontier. The distance was so short that I had no need to spare him, and, as I had over three-quarters of a mile start, I did not doubt that I could win a race in which my safety and probably my life were the stakes.

I was in luck, too, for the soldier before dismounting had thrust back his carbine into its leathern shoe, and in among his saddle-furniture I found a reserve supply of ammunition.

Turning in my saddle, I saw that the three soldiers had passed the two with whom I had had the tussle, and were galloping after me at full speed, striving might and main to lessen the distance between us, and I knew, of course, that old Kolfort had given them his most imperative command to overtake and capture me at all costs.

But a few minutes of this hot work showed me that I was better mounted than they, and that I was gaining. They perceived this, too, and resorted to a tactic which gave me some uneasiness. One after another they began firing their carbines, not of course at me, for I was hopelessly out of range, but in the hope of attracting any other patrol parties who might chance to be in the neighbourhood.

This was by no means to my taste. It suggested that they knew there were more troops about, and while I dug my heels into my willing horse's sides, and urged him with my voice to still greater speed, I cast ahead many anxious looks.

A minute later, too, I was thrown into a state of much perplexity as to my road. About half a mile in front the road forked, and I did not know whether my way lay to the right or left, and had no time to consult the plan of route. It would have been fatal to hesitate, however, and I was going to leave my horse to settle the matter for himself, trusting that he might have been stabled somewhere near the frontier and would thus make for that point, when a very disquieting fact decided me.

A couple of troopers were riding at a quick trot along the

road to the left, and coming in my direction. They were at a considerable distance, and I should reach the junction long before them. I determined to trust to fortune and take the other road.

They soon caught sight of me, and as the men pursuing me kept up their fire, the two in front hustled their horses into a gallop, evidently thinking something was wrong, and intending to cut me off and stop me.

They saw me turn into the right road, checked their horses, leapt into the fields, and came galloping across to intercept me. This was not practicable, however, because the point for which they were making was nearer to me by the road than to them by the fields, and after they had galloped half across the fields they called to me to stop. Perceiving my advantage, my answer was to urge my horse forward, till he was straining every nerve and flying over the ground like the gallant beast he was.

Then one of them reined up suddenly, and being well within range, he sat as steady as a rock on his horse, levelled his piece, and fired. Fortunately for me he was quite as bad a marksman as the majority of such men are, and the bullet whistled harmlessly by me as I dashed past at the same headlong speed. His companion had, however, come much nearer, and when he found he could not intercept me, he too halted and fired after me in his turn.

He also missed me, but I felt my horse give a violent change in his stride, and immediately begin to slacken speed. I looked round anxiously and found, to my intense alarm and consternation, that he was wounded, and had gone dead lame on his off hind leg.

For the first time I was inclined to despair. Behind me were five well-mounted men eagerly bent on my capture, and before me lay at least three miles of unknown road—even supposing that I was riding in the right direction—while my horse was already beginning to stagger in his stride. But my blood was up. I would not be taken alive, and I resolved to fight so long as I could lift a finger in self-defence.

Flight was now out of the question, however. Wounded as he was, my horse could not have carried me to the frontier had I been able to ease his pace, which was of course impossible. I could fight better on foot than on the back of a wounded horse, moreover, and I began to think desperately of my best course.

I drew out the trooper's carbine, put the ammunition into my

pockets, and looked about for the most likely spot for a last stand. About half a mile ahead of me I spied a peasant's cottage half in ruins, lying a little distance from the lane. Just the place for me! I urged my horse to a last effort, and he answered gallantly, as if he understood how dire was my need. But he was reeling badly when we reached the spot I was heading for; and the two men behind raised a glad shout as they saw me pull up, slip from the horse, and make a dash, carbine in hand, for the cover of the ruined cottage.

They both fired at me as I ran, a cowardly act that filled me with rage. Hitherto I had tried to avoid shedding blood, but I sent that thought to the winds now as I sprang behind the shelter of the welcome walls and turned to settle accounts with them. Armed as I was, I believed I could for a time hold the place against a party twice as strong as that which was coming against me, and I was so mad in my rage and disappointment, that I swore I would shoot without mercy any living soul that came within range.

The two soldiers came galloping up to the point where my horse had now fallen, and they stood chuckling at the successful shot which had wounded him.

I singled out one of them—the man who, as I thought, had fired the fatal shot—took deliberate aim, and fired. He dropped like a stone, and his companion turned instantly and scuttled back to meet the other three, who were now closing up fast. I smiled grimly as I thrust in another cartridge, and was turning to look for the next quarry when my heart gave another throb of dismay.

The place seemed alive with troops; and I saw another horseman coming from the opposite direction along the lane towards the cottage, and I did not doubt that he was the advance guard of a stronger patrol following behind.

The four men had halted out of range and were talking excitedly together, and I was thus at liberty to watch the new-comer, whose movements puzzled me considerably. When he heard the shot from my gun, and probably saw the smoke, instead of dashing forward to join the men threatening me, or falling back upon any party behind, he scuttled off the road and concealed himself in a small clump of trees, from which he seemed to be scanning the cottage where I lay. No trooper out on patrol would have acted so, and I concluded promptly that he was in some such condition as myself, and as eager as I to escape the attentions of the soldiers.

Could it be possible that he was a friend? The mere thought of such a chance in my desperate position filled me with excited pleasure, and, stepping forward, I stood so that the sun's rays fell right on me as I faced him, and I waved my hand. I thought he made some motion with his hand in reply, but he stood in the shadow of the trees, and was too far off for me to see him clearly. Then I waved my hand again, beckoning him to come to me, and had time to do no more before the four soldiers began to move, and I had to step back under shelter and watch them.

Apparently they had resolved to make a dash for the cottage, in the endeavour to capture me with a rush. But they should never reach the place alive. I calculated that I should have time for two shots with the carbine and half-a-dozen more with my revolver, and if I could not empty the four saddles my hand and eye and nerve had lost their cunning indeed.

They crossed into the field, and seeing that there were no windows in the end of the building from which I could fire upon them, they kept out of range until they were in a line with the end, and then began their advance. A shrewd enough plan, had I been a fool to be caught unawares, or a coward afraid to expose myself to their rickety fire. But I was neither, and creeping out at the front I was in a position to take a kneeling shot at them before they started the advance. I don't think they even saw me, for there was a relic of what had once been a palisade projecting from the end of the house, which gave an excellent cover, and I waited till they were well within range before I fired. One of them fell forward, and I had reloaded and was taking careful aim for my second shot, when with a loud shout they pulled up hastily and made ready to fire in their turn.

I didn't give them time to shoot before I fired again, and again brought one of them out of his saddle. This reduced the number to two, and neither of them had any relish for the business. They discharged their pieces at random, wheeled about suddenly, and galloped back faster than they had advanced. I had given them an excellent object-lesson in the value of good shooting, and I stood watching them in moody curiosity to see what they would do next.

Then I heard the sound of a galloping horse from the other end of the cottage, and when I ran back quickly to learn the cause I had indeed a joyful surprise. It was the horseman I had seen in the distance.

'Took you in the rear, Count,' said a deep voice I knew so

well; and the next instant Zoiloff and I stood hand-locked, his stern face aglow with pleasure and I with more delight in my heart than either words or eyes could tell. Never could a friend have been so welcome, and none more welcome than Zoiloff. I was so moved that I could not even find words to ask the news which I was burning to learn. He saw this, and said:

'All is well with the Princess. She is safe at Nish, waiting for you.' I wrung his hand afresh in my delight.

'Never did beleaguered force hear better news,' I said.

'The beleaguered force is doubled now,' he answered, smiling. 'Though I can't say it seems to need strengthening, judging by results. But now we had best be off, for the country between here and the frontier is like a rabbit-warren with the swarming troops. We shall probably have to hide, for we can't hold this place till nightfall, and I very much doubt if we can get through the pass in daylight.'

'I have a permit that will carry us through,' I said; 'but I have no horse to carry it on.'

'I'll soon mend that,' he answered, and without a word he mounted again and set off at a gallop toward the two soldiers, who stood together holding the horses of their wounded comrades by the bridles. What followed was a gleam of farce in the tragedy that surrounded us. The men seeing him coming were instantly filled with alarm, for my work had told its tale well enough on their nerves, and after making a show of resistance and firing their carbines at him with scarcely a pretence of taking aim, they plunged their spurs into their animals and shot away trying to lead the other horses with them. But Zoiloff gained at every stride, and when he fired his revolver after them they cast off the led horses and themselves fled for their lives in sheer scatterbrained fright. He had no difficulty in capturing one of the horses, and came cantering back to me sniling and victorious.

'What rabbits!' he said contemptuously.

'What a happy thought of yours,' I replied, as I mounted, and we stole off, keeping the cottage between us and the still flying soldiers.

'Shall we make a dash for it and risk everything; or shall we try and hide? Those curs will soon be after us with a larger pack in full cry, and we may find it difficult to hide.'

'We'll push straight for the frontier,' I answered, 'and trust to old Kolfort's signature to get us through. The patrols seem to

be in very small numbers, and if there's any trouble we can show fight. But now tell me what has happened, for I am on fire with impatience to hear everything.'

'Happily there's little enough to tell, for by some means we managed to escape all interference, and under your fellow Markov's guidance we reached the frontier without let or question. There was plenty of uneasiness after we left you as to whether we should be pursued; but thanks, I suppose, to your ruse, we were not followed, and the only trouble afterwards was in the frontier pass. It was only watched in the loosest manner in the world, and as Markov knew his business thoroughly he had us all past the look-out before they had even a suspicion of our presence. It was only a matter of a quick gallop then for a bit and we got through. I went on to Nish with the Princess, who was much fatigued of course, and it was at her urgent request, when you did not come yesterday, that I returned to see if I could hear any tidings of you. My uniform saved me from any trouble, and I was intending to go to Sofia, when I heard the firing and stopped to see what it meant. I saw you stand out in the sun glare just now, and though I could not definitely recognise you at such a distance I made a guess it was you, and rode up on the chance.'

'You left the Princess well?'

'In all save her anxiety for you; and that we may hope to remove in a few hours now. But how have you fared?'

I told him the story, and he listened with many an approving smile and nod, looking stern and serious at the story of the Countess Bokara's suicide, and laughing at the trick I had served old Kolfort.

'After all that, we are not going to be stopped now,' he said at the close; 'although we shall have need of clear heads and perhaps quick hands before we are through. But we shall know soon. You see that narrow road climbing the hill yonder, with that small station-house about half-way up. Well, the frontier line runs close ahead of that;' and he pointed to the spot. 'Hullo! who comes?' he added a minute later, as we turned a bend of the road and came upon two or three horse-soldiers.

We were riding at a brisk canter, and did not rein up until they challenged us. Seeing Zoiloff's uniform they saluted him, but the leader turned to me and asked for my permit.

'I am on special service,' I said quietly, producing the permit. He read it, returned it to me, drew back for us to proceed, and we cantered on without having wasted a minute.

'You had your wits about you when you got that paper,' said Zoiloff, laughing. 'If those fellows had only known what the special service was, we should have had a brush with them. Let's hope that those at the barrier will be as easily satisfied.'

'It's a nasty-looking road,' said I, when we reached the foot of the long tortuous hill. 'We'd better spare the cattle in case of a bother,' and we pulled up to a walking pace. I scanned the station-house closely as we came in sight of it.

'I wish to Heaven it was night. We could steal up that path there,' said Zoiloff, pointing to the right of the road. 'That's how Markov managed it. It leads out again about twenty or thirty yards on this side of the station-house yonder, and we rattled through at a gallop.'

'How many men are stationed there, do you think?'

'I couldn't see more than half-a-dozen or so all told this morning when I passed, and I stopped intentionally and chatted with the officer in command. But in a narrow place like this six men can do a lot.'

'I see there's a telegraph-wire. I hope the General hasn't managed to send a message,' I returned uneasily.

'I should think not, judging by the ease with which those men below there were satisfied. But I mean to get through. Once past the station-house, and we haven't more than two or three hundred yards to gallop before we're in Servia. But I confess I never thought of the telegraph;' and Zoiloff shook his head.

'Well, we'll try the papers first and the pistols afterwards, in case of need. And they won't find it easy to stop us.'

But as we drew closer I saw what Zoiloff meant about the ease with which a handful of resolute men could hold such a spot.

'They've turned out to receive us,' he said, as we saw an officer posting men to block the road. 'He won't attempt to stop me, I expect, and while you're showing him your permit I'll edge past and try to get the men out of their order so as to leave a gap for you to dash through. Then I'll follow you, and they may hesitate about firing on me.'

'Very well; but we can't make much of a plan. Probably I may find it best to appear to yield at first and then wait for the moment to make the rush;' and with that we rode on slowly, watching the men ahead of us closely, but laughing and chatting together as though the last thought in our heads was of any

chance of being stopped. And we were both laughing heartily as at some joke when the officer in command met Zoiloff with a salute and turned to address me.

'Your permit, sir, if you please,' he said courteously, but as I thought with a glance of suspicion.

'Certainly,' I replied, and I took it out and handed it to him. As he read it Zoiloff pushed forward and entered into conversation with the men. There were only five of them, making six with the officer, as Zoiloff had said, and they were on foot. I saw him push his horse between the two at the end of the short line, and then as he chatted he coolly turned his horse broadside on the road, thus making a big gap. It was cleverly done, and he sat there saying something which made the men laugh.

'This mentions no name, sir,' said the officer, looking up from the paper. 'May I inquire your name?'

'Certainly. I am the Hon. Gerald Winthrop, an Englishman.' The reply perplexed him.

'An Englishman? And on special service for General Kolfort? I don't wish to appear impertinent, but have you another name?'

'I am also a Roumanian Count—Count Benderoff.'

'Ah!' His tone told me at once that he had had some instructions about me, and I began to prepare for emergencies. 'I am placed in an awkward position, Count, but I'm afraid I cannot allow you to pass.'

'My business is very urgent, lieutenant.'

'The delay will probably be only a brief one. I am expecting a messenger from General Kolfort, and I thought you were probably from him. No doubt the moment he arrives you will be at liberty to proceed. But you'll understand my position.'

'The consequences of stopping me may be serious.'

'So may be those of allowing you to pass, Count. But in any case I have no alternative.'

'But I have ridden straight from General Kolfort himself, who handed me the permit personally.'

'My instructions have come over the wires, and within the last few minutes; and they are imperative not to allow you to pass until the General himself or those he is sending shall arrive. If you will dismount I will try to make the delay as little irksome as possible, though one's resources in a God-forsaken place like this are not abundant.'

'Do you mean you wish to arrest me?' I asked quickly.

‘Certainly not. You are at liberty to return if you please; my instructions are merely not to allow you to pass the frontier.’

‘Quiet, mare!’ I called to my horse, which was fidgeting and plunging restlessly, as I touched her secretly with my heel, making it difficult for him to lay his hand on the bridle. Then I laughed as if the thing were a joke, and gave Zoiloff a look. He understood it, and began to edge his horse so as to leave room for me to pass.

‘It’s very ridiculous,’ I said to the officer, who had drawn a little away from me, ‘but I suppose there’s no help for it; and in any case I shall be glad of some breakfast.’

‘I shall be delighted to be your host,’ he replied, without a suspicion of my intention; and he called to one of the men to come and hold my horse.

This made the gap in their rank larger than ever; and, causing my horse to fidget and strain at the bit, I suddenly slackened the reins, plunged my heels into her flanks, and darted away up the hill as fast as she could gallop.

‘Hallo! She’s run away with him!’ said Zoiloff; and he wheeled round and dashed after me.

It was some seconds before the officer realised how we had fooled him. Then we heard the order given to fire after us, and the next instant the report of the guns rang out, echoing and re-echoing among the crags on either side of the narrow gorge.

The bullets whistled by me; and, glancing back, I saw that Zoiloff was following all right. A second volley was fired, but not until we had already passed the frontier; and I did not draw rein till I was nearly to the crest of the hill and within sight of the Servian station-house over the crest. Then I found that Zoiloff was not so close to me as he should have been, and I halted to wait for him. Below him I saw the officer and two of the men had mounted and were in hot pursuit.

Zoiloff was leaning forward curiously in the saddle, sitting very loosely, and his horse could hardly move. I rode back to him, filled with alarm.

He looked up as I neared, and I saw his face was bloodless. He tried to wave to me to go forward, but his hand fell listlessly.

‘Are you wounded, friend?’ I asked.

‘No—at least not much. Go on!’ he said, his voice weak and faint; and his horse was staggering so that I thought it would fall. Meanwhile the men behind were coming up quickly.

‘Come on to my horse,’ I cried, my heart sick with pain and

fear for him, as I rode to his side and tried to lift him off. But at that moment his horse went down heavily, and only with the greatest difficulty did I save Zoiloff from an ugly fall.

In a moment I dismounted. There was no time now to mount with him on my horse, so I laid him under cover of his own fallen animal and turned with bitter rage in my heart to check the men behind us, as well as to revenge the hurt of my staunch friend, who had given himself to save me.

Snatching the carbine from my saddle, I knelt down, and, firing over the prone horse, I aimed at the foremost rider, who fell in a huddled mass on to his horse's shoulder and then dropped to the ground.

I was ramming home another cartridge as the other two halted and took aim. I crouched under shelter of the horse, and felt him quiver and kick feebly as one of the bullets plugged into him; and then the men came dashing forward again.

But not for many strides, for my second shot sent the officer toppling out of his saddle heavily to the rough road. I loaded again instantly, for the sight of Zoiloff's death-white face and the thought of his wound maddened me so that I could have killed a dozen men in cold blood to avenge him.

The remaining trooper had little stomach for any further fight, however, and he reined up and stood irresolute.

'Go back, if you care for your life,' I called to him. 'We are on Servian ground, and you have no right to pursue me.' He was afraid for his own skin to come on, and yet afraid for duty's sake to turn back, and I saw him open his carbine at the breech to reload.

I did not give him time to do that, however, before I fired. I missed the man, but struck his weapon, shattering it in his hand. This was much more convincing than any words, and, recognising his unarmed helplessness, he wheeled his horse round and rode off back down the hill.

I had won; but what a price had the victory cost!

I bent over my wounded friend, my heart sick with my grief.

'Fly!' he whispered. Wounded sorely as he was, his thoughts were all for me and none for himself.

'There is no need, my dear friend. There's no one to follow us. Can you bear for me to lift you on to my horse? We're safe.'

'I'm glad. I'm not hurt much,' he whispered, trying to smile.

I lifted him in my arms, and, drawing my horse to a stone by the side of the road, managed to mount with him; and then, saving him all in my power from the jolting of the horse, I walked up the rest of the hill and over to the Servian station-house.

The men turned out to meet us.

'My friend is sorely wounded,' said I.

'I heard the firing, but my orders are not to interfere,' said the officer in command.

'The outrage was committed on Servian territory,' I replied.

'I have strict orders not to cause any trouble with the Bulgarians just at present,' he said, as if by way of apologetic explanation of his not having come to my aid. 'We don't inquire too closely into what is done east of the station-house.'

'Can you give me a place where my friend can rest?'

He looked uneasy at the question and hesitated.

'Can't he bear any further journey?'

'He is badly wounded, sir,' I returned, with some indignation.

'I can do better than give him a bed here. My men shall carry him on a litter down to the village at the foot of the hill, where there is a priest who knows something of surgery, and he can get medical aid.'

'As quick as you can, for God's sake!' I said.

Poor Zoiloff had fainted, and lay helpless in my arms, his head resting on my shoulder.

The men lifted him gently off the horse, the litter was brought out, and I helped to place him in it.

'I'm afraid I needn't ask for his papers,' said the officer, as the men moved off.

I showed him my English passport, as clearing the way for me, and, with a mere glance at it, he returned it.

'I hope you will have better news than I fear of your friend,' he said warmly.

I could not answer him; I was too broken with this new trouble. I followed the mournful little procession, and I am not ashamed to say that as I watched it and gazed at the white face in the litter my eyes were more than once half blinded by tears.

CHAPTER XXXII.

'GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN.'

DOWN in that lonely Servian village, nestling beautifully at the foot of the range of hills, a scene followed, inexpressibly sad and mournful to me.

We carried Zoiloff to the house of the priest, a man whose heart was as large as his means were straitened, and together we laid my poor friend on the low truckle bed in the barely furnished room. I helped while the examination of his wounds was made, watching the priest's face with an anxiety that cannot be put in words.

'How did it happen?' he whispered.

'A gunshot wound somewhere in the back, I fear,' I told him.

But there was no need for this explanation, for the blood guided him to the wound easily enough.

'The ball has passed through his body and through his right lung.'

'Is there any hope?' I asked, my own heart answering the question before it was asked. He shook his head sadly.

'On this earth none,' he said. He stopped the bleeding, which was comparatively slight.

'There is very little blood,' I said, hoping against hope.

'The bleeding is internal. No man can save him. I have done all that can be done. Let us pray for him.'

He laid my friend back on the bed with a touch as deft and gentle as a woman's, and, kneeling by the bedside, he began to pray earnestly and fervently, in a soft voice rich with the rare gem of unaffected sympathy. Following his example, I knelt on the other side of the bed, and, with my face buried in my hands, I tried to follow his prayers through the tumult of my thronging emotions at the knowledge that this brave, staunch friend must die, and that it was his friendship that had cost him his life.

How long the good priest prayed I know not, but after a time I was conscious that the rich, sweet voice had ceased, and when I looked up I was alone with my dying comrade.

I got up from my knees, and placing the one rush chair by the bed, sat down to watch for the end and wait lest he should return to consciousness.

A short time later the priest looked in and beckoned me.

‘The men who carried your friend here are still waiting; shall I keep them any longer?’ I placed my purse in his hands to give them what he would, merely asking him to reward them generously.

‘Will he recover consciousness?’ I asked.

‘It were better not: but he is in God’s hands,’ he answered reverently; and I stole back to my chair to resume my vigil.

He looked already like a dead man, and I had to hold my ear close to his mouth before I could catch the faintest sign of his breathing. I felt for the pulse and could detect no flicker of it, and then I laid my fingers gently over his heart. The beats were barely to be discerned. As I drew my hand away I came upon a secret. A dead flower bound by a wisp of faded ribbon was fastened close to his heart, both flower and ribbon dabbled with his blood.

The sight of the little withered memorial of a dead passion, so wholly unexpected in one I had found so hard and stern, affected me deeply. I held it a moment, wondering what lay behind, and where and who was the woman whose heart would be stricken by the blow of his death even as sorely as mine would be. Then I laid it so that it rested on his faithful heart, and, taking his hand, sat with it in mine.

The hours passed uncounted by me. Once or twice the good priest came back to the room, and at length, when Zoiloff showed no sign of a return to consciousness, he administered the last rites of the Church. The sacrament was placed between the nerveless lips, and the priest and I joined in the solemn ceremonial.

‘He will not last long. I am surprised he is still alive,’ he said, when the simple, beautiful ceremony was over. ‘God be merciful to him!’

When the priest left the room I followed and asked for some brandy, as I thought there might be some last message Zoiloff might wish to send by me, and I hoped to rouse a final flicker of strength for the purpose.

I poured a few drops into his mouth with a spoon, and after a few minutes gave him a second dose. I detected, as I thought, some signs of a rally of strength, and gave him more, and sat with his hand in mine and my eyes on his face and waited.

‘Zoiloff, Zoiloff, my dear friend!’ I called gently.

To my delight his eyelids quivered slightly, and after a moment or two they opened and he looked at me. He recognised me, and his mouth moved as if to smile, and I felt a slight, very

slight, pressure of the hand. I gave him more of the spirit, and it appeared to lend him a little strength.

His lips moved as if to speak and his eyes brightened.

I felt his hand move in mine as if he would lift it, and, guessing his wish, I lifted it to his heart so that the fingers could feel the little treasure trove of love that lay there. His fingers closed over it, and he smiled again. But his strength would not suffer him to hold his arm up, so I propped it up, that the hand might rest on the flower.

'Can you hear me, Zoiloff? Do you know me?'

His lips moved and his eyes seemed to assent.

'Can I carry any message for you?' and I laid my fingers on the dead flower to show my meaning, and then bent my ear down to his mouth.

He seemed to make a great effort to speak, and I caught a struggling of the breath, as I held my own in the eager strain to listen. But finding he could not speak I gave him a few drops more of the brandy, now convinced that he wished to say something.

'Have you any message, dear friend?' I asked again, as I bent down.

There came another pause of effort and then I caught a word.

'Christina's,' and I felt the fingers near his heart close on the flower.

In an instant the full knowledge of his heroic sacrifice rushed upon me. He loved Christina; and in the nobleness of his self-denying love he had given his life that mine should be saved for her.

I grasped his other hand and held it, as I pressed my lips to his marble forehead.

Then I saw his lips move again.

'Leave it,' and the movement of his fingers near his heart told me what he meant.

'On my honour, Zoiloff,' I said earnestly. 'God bless you! the staunchest friend man ever had. I never dreamt of this.'

'Don't tell her,' he whispered, trying to shake his head. Then I felt his hand try to lift mine, and, divining his wish, I laid mine to his lips, and he kissed it. This effort exhausted the little reserve of strength, and with a sigh his eyes closed, and his hand slipped utterly nerveless and flaccid from mine.

I thought he was gone; but he was not, and when I held a glass to his lips there was a faint dulling with his breath. Taking his hand again in mine, I waited for the end.

He lingered perhaps an hour longer till the twilight began to gloom the little chamber, and I was hoping that he would pass away in this peaceful slumber of unconsciousness, when I heard his breath strengthen suddenly. He opened his eyes; the fingers on the flower at his heart tightened into almost a firm clasp; a quiver shook his body, and raising his head slightly from the pillow, he cried in a voice strong enough to surprise and for an instant give me hope:

‘Christina, Chris——’ The word was not finished before the spasm of strength was spent, and he fell back again with a deep sigh.

He was dead; and I thank God that in the last struggle of his strong brave soul to escape he had been comforted by the love which had controlled and impulsed every act and motive of his life, and which he had carried locked away from the knowledge of all the world in the deepest recess of his loyal, noble heart.

If I had treasured him as a friend in his life, I loved him in his self-denying death; and when I had satisfied myself that he had really passed, I flung myself on my knees by his bier and wept like a woman.

The room was dark when I rose from my uncontrollable passion of grief, and I pressed my lips to his cold forehead before I drew the sheet over the dead face and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE END.

It was with a heavy heart that I mounted my horse and, accompanied by a guide whom the priest found for me, set out that night for the railway station to take the train to Nish. Even the thought that the morrow would see me with Christina could not at first relieve the gloom of my sorrow or take from my eyes the picture of the cold still form of my dead friend, lying in the sombre bare room in the priest’s house. I had left him full instructions for sending on the body to Nish, and had given him a sum of money which made him glad with the thought of all the charities he could dispense among the poor of the village.

But youth is youth and love is love, and as the miles passed which brought me nearer to Christina the drear mournfulness of

my grief for the dead began to lose its blackness beneath the glamour of my love for the living. It was a sad tale I had to carry her after all, and though in obedience to my comrade's dying wish I could tell her nothing of his love for her, I knew how she would mourn his loss. But love is selfish; and when at length I reached Nish my heart was beating fast with the throbbing of the delicious, delirious knowledge that we were close together again, with no obstacle to bar the mutual avowal of our passion, and no need to dread another parting.

It was far too late when I arrived for me to seek her that night, and I myself was so spent with my experiences of the last thirty hours that I was glad to throw myself on a bed. Excited though I was, I slept soundly for some hours, and did not awake until the sun had long been streaming into my room.

I hurried, of course, to the British Consul for tidings of Christina. He told me she was staying in his house, and, at my request, sent at once to tell her I had arrived.

'There is great news this morning, Mr. Winthrop,' he said; 'news that will interest you as much as it has me. The Russian plot has failed. Thanks largely to my colleague, the English Consul at Philippopoli, General Mountkoroff has declared for the Prince, and he is even at this minute marching on Sofia with the flower of the Bulgarian army against the traitors who sold themselves to this Kolfort and Russia.'

'Will the Prince return then?'

'Assuredly he will. The Powers will stand behind Mountkoroff, and Russia will not venture to resist.'

'Then my friend Lieutenant Spernow will be safe,' I said, describing briefly the plight in which I had left him.

'You need not have a moment's uneasiness. Russian influence for the moment will decline to zero, and the Prince's friends will be paramount.'

'Will you telegraph at once for news of him?'

'Willingly;' and he went at once to give his instructions. The result was all I could have wished, and later in the day telegrams arrived from Spernow himself, saying that both he and Mademoiselle Broumoff were safe.

'The Princess Christina is ready to receive you,' he said when he came back. 'Will you come with me?'

I followed him with heart beating high, and, as if he understood how matters were, he opened the door of a room and stood back for me to enter alone.

She had been eagerly watching for my coming, but, thinking that perhaps the Consul would be with me, she had put a strong restraint upon herself, and stood waiting in an attitude of reserve. But the colour mantling her cheeks, and the bright glow in her eyes, told me her feelings, and as soon as she saw me enter by myself she ran to meet me, and with a glad cry threw herself into my arms with the utter self-abandonment of love.

It was no moment for speech, and many minutes passed with nothing more than an exclamation or two of delight or a few softly breathed words of passion. All thoughts of the dangers passed, the anxieties still present, even of my poor dead friend, were lost, and merged in the ecstasy of holding in my arms the woman I loved beyond all else on earth, looking into her eyes glowing with love for me, hearing my name whispered in her moving voice, and feeling her lips pressed to mine. It was a moment of love rapture, and so untellable in any language but that which love itself speaks.

When at length we drew apart, the first wild rush of excitement past, and sat handlocked to talk, I saw how anxiety and suspense had paled her, and how deeply she had suffered.

She listened intently to the story of my experiences since we had parted; and the ebbing and flowing colour, the passing light and shadow in her eyes, and the quick catches in her breath told of varied feelings which the recital roused. When I came to the sad story of poor gallant Zoiloff's wound and death, she was moved to tears of deep and tender regret. But we were lovers and but just reunited, and the interchange of sympathies and mutual comfort in this our first sorrow in common served to awake a fresh chord in the rhythmic harmony of our love.

For her friend, Mademoiselle Broumoff, she was still full of tender concern, and it was a cause of rare happiness that, while we were still together—for the interview lasted some hours—the news came over the wires telling us that she and Spornow were safe, and coming post haste to join us at Nish.

There was but one shadow, besides Zoiloff's death, that hovered in the background. The question whether she would feel it her duty to return to Sofia. I asked her with some dread.

'I have been thinking of it while we talked, and since you told me of the turn which matters have taken,' she said, her voice low and anxious, as if she were undecided.

I remembered my despatch to the Foreign Office urging that support should be given to her. But it was not in my power to

wish that she should go; for I knew that it might still mean the breaking asunder of our paths in life.

‘What do you think, Gerald?’

‘I cannot think on such a subject, I can only fear,’ I replied in a tone as low and tense as her own. ‘I might lose you then.’

‘Shall the woman or the Princess answer it?’ she asked, her face all womanly with the light of love.

‘The lover, Christina,’ I whispered.

‘Then it is answered: my place is here,’ she said softly. ‘The woman is stronger than the Princess where you are concerned, Gerald; or should I say weaker?’ she added, smiling up to me.

‘We will leave it soon for the wife to decide the term,’ said I, and the answer brought a vivid blush to her face. But it pleased her, for she sighed happily as she let her head sink contentedly on my shoulder.

It is six years since the stirring events happened of which I have just written, sitting at my study table in my lovely English home. As I lay the pen down and close my eyes in reverie two memory pictures come before me. The one black-edged with the gloom of sorrow and death; the other radiant with the glowing promise of since realised happiness.

In that far away Servian town the bearers have just set down a coffin by the side of a freshly-dug grave. The priest is reading the funeral service; the white robed choristers cluster near him; Spernow and I stand side by side at the foot of the grave listening to the words as they fall in rhythmic chant from the priest’s lips, and thinking of the gallant comrade whose bones are being lowered to their last resting place, and I of the strange secret of his hopeless, noble, self-denying love that is being buried with him. The final moment comes. The sturdy bearers lift the coffin and lower it, and pull up the ropes with a rasp that sounds like the severing of all hope; the earth is cast down by the priest and falls clattering on the lid, and the service goes on to its melancholy finish. The priest pronounces the last words of prayer and blessing; stands a moment with covered face in silent prayer and then turns away, followed by the little choir. Spernow and I move forward to take the last look at the coffin—a long, lingering, memory-fraught look—and when we in our turn move sadly away and our eyes meet, I see that my companion’s are wet with

tears. Poor, brave, noble Zoiloff, lying in that far away lonely grave!

In the other picture Spernow and I are again among the chief figures, but not alone now. Nathalie is by his side, Christina by mine. Again there is the same priest and the same choir, but we stand in the lofty chancel of a stately church, and the words are not of death but of marriage. Around us a small group is gathered, well-wishers, relatives, and friends, with faces bright with gladness and tongues eager to burst out with noisy congratulations and fervent wishes for our happiness. And when the blessing has been given, and we lead our brides down the aisle, the mighty building resounds with the pealing notes of the organ, and we leave the church through groups of curiously garbed men and women.

And at that point my reverie is broken by sounds of children's prattle. I look out on to the sunlit lawn to where Christina is kneeling and listening with a smile to the cheery chatter of our two children. All is warmth, peace, love, and rest in my English life now; and, as I glance at my dear ones, I thank Heaven with fervent gratitude that they are not destined to aspire to the dangerous splendour and evanescent glory of a minor Throne. I get up quietly, and, stepping through the window into the sunlight, am hailed with a cry and rush of delight from my little darlings and a welcome of love light from the eyes of my beautiful wife.

THE END.

At the Sign of the Ship.

MR. BARRIE so seldom produces a novel, and when he does, the work is so obviously marked by genius that one may be permitted to scrutinise it more closely than in the case of romances written for the amusement of an hour. On myself the first impression made by *Tommy and Grizel* was one of irritation, which has not entirely disappeared, as may be perceived. But the more one considered the story the more one appreciated its qualities, without losing sight of its defects. Consequently I have written and rewritten my poor notions about it, nearly as often as the hero rewrote the manuscript which came to such an ill end. May it be a warning to authors to keep their rough copies, and not fall into the evil case of Tommy and of Mr. Carlyle! I read that the MS. of an act in Mr. Stephen Philipps's new play was lost for whole days of agitated anxiety. Now this may be avoided by keeping rough copies. Moreover, type-writing is cheap, too cheap; I wish type-writers would stand out for more.

* * *

It is also said in *The Bookman* that Mr. Barrie modified, in a favourable sense, the character of Tommy, altering passages in the serial version of his adventures. Ouida has lately denounced such modifications, too severely, I think; Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Thackeray altered and amended, often for the better. Works written for monthly publication, like those of Thackeray and Dickens, written in a hurry, might justly have been reconsidered, abridged, and improved, before they took their permanent form. But perhaps neither of these great men seriously reflected that his performances were classics.

* * *

As to Mr. Barrie's novel, when he trusts to his genius it is admirable; above all in the scenes where Tommy 'saves the flag,'

and in the account of Grizel's insanity—passages exquisitely strange and tender, if almost too poignant. But Mr. Barrie is not, unhappily, content to give his genius free play and leave its operation unadulterated. He keeps intruding the self-conscious elements of didacticism and satire; now, satire is not really his *forte*, and explicit preaching is always an error. It is Miss Edgeworth, I think, though I have mislaid the reference, who says that the ethics of Scott are interwoven in the warp and woof of his tales: not applied in patches. Fielding and Thackeray do stop to sew on the moral patches—a practice only redeemed by their style, and not redeemed by style in these excrescences on Mr. Barrie's work.

* * *

In the first place, many of us remember the burlesque sermon preached on the text—

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as quick as you can;
Knead it and bake it as fast as can be,
And put it in the oven for Tommy and me.

The preacher draws out his moral application.

'Who is Tommy? I am Tommy. You, my brethren, are Tommy. We are all Tommy!' Mr. Barrie preaches to a similar tune: we are all Tommy, all miserable sinners. Our Tomminess may not be the same Tomminess, but Tommies are we all—the men at least. Of course we are; but a novel is a novel, and a sermon is a sermon.

* * *

Again, Mr. Barrie, like Thackeray, abuses the method of side whispers to the audience. He tells us that he had made up his mind not to call his Grizel beautiful. 'Probably when I am chapters ahead I shall return to this one and strike out the word beautiful, and then as likely as not I shall come back afterwards and put it in again. Whether it will be there at the end, God knows.' This revelation of Mr. Barrie's methods as a conscientious artist may please some readers, but I own to taking little pleasure in the aside. Of course Thackeray did the same kind of thing, as to Colonel Altamont, for instance, and his reprieve. But his is an example *vitiis imitabile*. Once more, Thackeray erred by his constant attacks on Becky Sharp and Blanche Amory. He was too hard on them, and Mr. Barrie is eternally denouncing his own

hero. He says, 'Have I been too cunning for you, or have you seen through me all the time? Have you discovered that I was really pitying the boy, who was so fond of games that he could not with years become a man, telling nothing about him that was not true, but doing it with unnecessary scorn in the hope that I might goad you into crying, "Come, come, you are too hard on him"? Well, the expression of scorn by the author is unnecessary. The method is bad; it is the method of George Eliot with Rosamond Vincey. Flaubert is not hard on Emma Bovary in that nagging kind of way, and Flaubert's method is better in this instance. It makes his tale more plausible, more real, more "convincing."'

* *

Tommy, as here treated, is not convincing at all to me, no more convincing than the Atheist of the pulpit. He is rather a figure-head for the author to hack at, like the Turk's head on which Oliver Proudfoot used to practice his swashing blow in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. One believes but inadequately in his literary and social success, in his intentionally spraining his ankle, in his reasons for spraining it, and in his death by being strangled in the collar of his coat on a spike, while climbing a garden wall to flirt with a married lady, who stares at his waistcoat and tells him he is 'too stout.' Ladies, of course, may fall back on the badinage of the liberal barmaid, but the whole sequence of events is not persuasive. An eminent novelist strangled on a spike in the garden wall of the local nobleman! 'It is jolly thin,' as the man says in *The Liars*. One can scarcely think that Mr. Barrie is more in earnest than Mr. Payn was when he boiled his villains, or planted them in molten lava; or brought a man in a diving dress out of a pond to rescue a lady from drowning. Mr. Barrie is trifling with our feelings, like Mr. Stevenson when (in a kind of burlesque) he converts his Prince into a tobacconist.

* *

The results of a wrong method, a burlesque method, react on the character and career of Grizel. The admirable chapter (xvi.) 'How could you hurt your Grizel so?'

(Oh, don't deceive me!

Oh, never leave me!

How could you treat a poor maiden so?)

is serious human tragedy. The man who cannot love (Tommy), and is forced by circumstances into love-making, is tragic. But

then he is Tommy, and Tommy is a chopping-block, a thing at which to deliver moral cuts and thrusts. Then Grizel's discovery of Tommy's flirtation is *vieux jeu*: the old, old Guy Livingstone conservatory scene, with modifications: an arbour in the grounds of a foreign hotel. This is a mere matter of *charpentage*, I know, of 'Jining your flats.' And it is a curious thing that the greatest geniuses, Shakespeare, Molière, Scott, have been quite unconscientious about *charpentage*, and about 'huddled up dénouements.' I feel as Mr. Browning's Andrea del Sarto felt when criticising the drawing of Raffaele. Anybody may cry, 'If you know so well how it should be done, go and do it yourself.' But many a bad bat is a good coach of batsmen.

We know what's right, but only so:
We cannot practice what we know.

Now, Mr. Barrie, to lead up to the *éclaircissement* of Grizel, first uses that old datum of folk-lore, the 'Life Token,' the plant which withers with Tommy's withering fidelity. You find it, four thousand years ago, in the Egyptian tale of the 'Two Brothers.' This revival is quite in keeping, and it leads on to the admirable description of Grizel's journeys, with their repetition in the dreams of her insanity. But that the end of the journey should precisely coincide with the moment when Tommy is making a fool of himself in a damp, disagreeable hotel arbour is a strain on coincidence and belief: and the effect is of old familiar to the novel-reader. An effort of invention was needed, and was not made; the error is merely in practical technique, and is, probably, of no great consequence.

* * *

More important is the wicked, fashionable Siren, Lady Pippinworth. I do not know much about Sirens: novelists, not mere essayists, are their game, and it is true that very odd stories are told of their doings in real life—by novelists. But it does not seem to me that we are made to realise the unholy fascinations of Lady Pippinworth. Mr. Barry, after cataloguing her perfections, *item*, a pair of long eyelashes, &c., says, 'Now we have the secret of her charm,' but I do not feel that we really have it. 'She had no sense of humour, and was rather stupid, so it is no wonder that the men ran after her.' The military men, perhaps, but not Tommy. However, these things are matters of taste.

* * *

In some things, Tommy is very like another celebrated and delightful Thomas—Master Tom Sawyer. 'He saw his effects being examined after all that was mortal of T. Sandys had been consigned to earth, and this pathetic little glove coming to light. Ah, then, then Grizel would know.' Even so did T. Sawyer speculate on the effect to be produced by his death, not that he was drowned, any more than Tommy was in love with Grizel. But Tom was a boy of fourteen; even Tommy, a successful novelist grown up, could hardly be so very much of a boy as our beloved Tom Sawyer. And I doubt whether the persons whom Mr. Barrie calls 'The Souls' would have 'invited him to join the society,' as there was not, in fact, a society to join, though there was a set that did not like tedious people, and that gave rise to mythology. After all (and it may be a reply to my objections), Tommy (as I gather) was only about twenty-three at this time; more precociously successful than Mr. Kipling. If this be so, then probably Mr. Barrie really is too hard on Tommy. Consider the extraordinary devotion of Tommy, before his last, and I think improbable, moral breakdown. 'We are a kindly people,' says Tommy, speaking of sentimentalists, or, at least, for a certain sort of sentimentalists. They have too soft hearts, and, on the impulse of the softness, do harm which harder people, more simple people, and people with more knowledge of the world than they have (at twenty-two) would avoid. And then they break down, like Tommy, and play the cur; sometimes. But, as I understand your sentimentalist, with all his natural goodness of heart, he will attempt showy sacrifices, and his purse will be open; but one thing he won't do—he won't persevere in a hopeless task of devotion, or of any thing else that tries him through every moment of the day and many moments of the night. Tommy undertakes this labour for many months. Now, it is not as if he were a drunkard who had been steady for an equal time. It is that no real sentimental Tommy could have persevered at all. If he did, then he was no longer a Tommy; and did not deserve a burlesque exit, which, in any case, closes the book with a renewed sense of 'Oh, wind it up anyhow, with a sneer,' as in the lamented case of Mr. Stevenson's Prince of the *New Arabian Nights*. One does not mind this method, in a work of humorous fancy, but so much of Mr. Barrie's book is serious and noble, that his asides about Tommy and other things, with all the *explicit* satire from beginning to end, seem intrusions from another sphere, a sphere in which Mr. Barrie is not strong. They jar on

one's taste. To this Mr. Barrie has perhaps given his answer beforehand: 'I don't blame you, but you are a Tommy.' I answer that Mr. Barrie is a Calvinist, a believer in Election, in Tommy's predestined reprobate condition—a most immoral doctrine. For Tommy's, I think, was final perseverance, after eighteen months of it, and *this* Tommy would not have fallen away and played the fool with such an appallingly stupid and underbred example of the Strange Woman. Moreover, I do not think that a thorough irredeemable sentimentalist would have behaved to his sister so nobly as Tommy did. No, he would have left her at home, and gone out to dine with his friends, the aristocracy. This, of course, is but one person's theory of human nature against another's, but there may be surer ground for the objections to Mr. Barrie's method, as displayed in this novel.

* * *

Tommy, it appears, like other æsthetic young men, allowed his Art to come between him and his young woman. Plainly, no one individual girl, however 'ripe and real' (Byron) can come up to your 'stone ideal.' Certainly, I never saw any lass who was at all to be compared with the Psyche of Naples; *she* has the advantage of never growing middle-aged, or losing the little that is left of her figure. Tommy had doubtless thought of all that, which explains the following verses. They were found, by a friend, with other literary matters, among a heap of papers, in a rag-shop at Dundee, and were signed T. S., manifestly Thomas Sandys. They appear to have been written under the influence of Mr. Rossetti; there is a bloom of blue-mouldiness not otherwise to be explained. It appears that they were sold at the 'roup,' or auction, of the effects of the late Mrs. Thomas Sandys, *née* Grizel.

THE NEMESIS OF ART.

(Written after reading *The Tinted Venus*, by Mr. Anstey.)

I.

Alas! that thou art dear, and not so dear,
As faces fading from the painted wall,
The Queens of ages immemorial,
Helen, and grace of golden Guinevere!
Alas! thy kisses are not worth a tear,
One single tear of all the tears that fall
For memory of loves gone out of call,
And these old voices that we shall not hear,

Alas ! that thou art fair, and not so fair,
 As ladies Lionardo loved to paint,
 Set in a frame of curled and golden hair,
 Saintlike ; with smiles that are not of a Saint,
 Glad with inexplicable mirth, or faint
 With extreme languor and supreme despair.

II.

We love like him who gave, long time ago,
 To Venus' marble hand his wedding ring,
 No more his love's embrace might round him cling,
 Nor heart with heart responsive ebb and flow ;
 Only the Goddess-ghost would come and go,
 To fan him with the breath of her white wing,
 And dull the fever, and assuage the sting,
 And comfort him a little in his woe.
 And we, like him, have given our hearts away
 To Beauty that was never clad in clay,
 That puts all mortal loveliness to scorn ;
 A pale, a bitter, and a jealous Queen,
 With her undying beauty set between
 Our loves and us, to make us all forlorn.

The very last line has a reminiscence of 'The House that Jack Built,' but, otherwise, the sonnets are rather creditable to the Muse of Tommy.

* * *

In the last number of the 'Ship' I remarked that 'the late Mr. Eric Mackay must have been very young, in outward aspect, for his age.' I only saw the deceased gentleman on two or three occasions, and, as I said, 'should have estimated him to be much my junior.' But I am informed, and desire to state, that, as a matter of fact, Mr. Mackay was born in 1835, and therefore had seen nearly ten summers—say nine—more than those which I have been privileged to observe. The appearance of age is often very deceitful, as anyone may notice at a gathering of old college contemporaries. Some are bald and fat, some are grey and lean, some seem very little altered.

* * *

The sixpenny reissue may, or may not, be lucrative to the author and publisher, but it is a boon to men. In a journey to

the Temple by railway I love to buy a sixpenny edition of Mr. Stevenson, or Mr. Mason's *Morrice Buckler*, and read it all the way, and leave it for the porter. These books must entertain and elevate him and his family. Thus I read, with awe and trepidation, Mr. Wells's 'Invisible Man,' at sixpence. The romance kept me awake, or helped to do so, and I pondered on the problem. How should the Invisible Man have arranged his plan? His clothes, you see, were visible, with nobody inside them, and this led to remarks, and to be really invisible he had to go naked, even in winter. Well, why did he not, by scientific processes, make his *clothes* invisible? He could do it; he began by making a fragment of tissue invisible, also a cat. With a grain of sense he would first have abstracted the visibility of his coat and trousers and boots and shirt. He was a foolish and really ungentlemanly character, rather like Mr. Hyde. Of course he does horrid things, and comes to a horrid end. Now, Mr. Anstey would have made him infinitely diverting, and brought him good fortune in the long run. I love a good-humoured author, like Shakespeare in the Comedies, or Dickens in *Pickwick*; one who forgives his rogues, and fools, and villains, converts them in the twinkling of an eye, fills their pockets, and even marries them to nice girls. This cannot be wrong, or Shakespeare would not have set the example. Shakespeare would not have strung up Tommy on that mysterious spike.

He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well,

his Claudio can say, with confidence, if he chooses.

* * *

The most unsentimental broth of a boy that ever I heard of lived at Beminster in 1720. This is a boy story, not a ghost story, though a ghost comes in. At Beminster the school was in the same building as the church. One Saturday, when the boys were let loose to play at noon, they heard a clang in the church as of a beaten brass plate. They searched the church and found nobody. Then came sounds as if a service was going on, but still the church was empty. The odd noises continued, and, looking again through the open door, the boys saw a coffin, and, sitting beside it, one of their schoolfellows who had died three or four weeks earlier. One boy, who had since joined the school, did not recognise the boy, whom he had never seen, but especially spoke to a white rag round his wrist. This rag the boy had

actually been wearing over a wound or sprain at the time of his death. Not all the boys saw the coffin, because there was such a crowd of them in the doorway that those behind only saw what was straight in front of them, namely, their dead playmate.

* *

Among the rest was a half-brother of the deceased, and *he* was my unsentimental Tommy. 'Why,' said this thoroughly natural lad, 'there's our John wearing a coat like the one I have on. I'll throw a stone at him.' The others remonstrated, but Tommy picked up a stone and threw it at the appearance, saying, 'Take that!' The phantasm and the coffin instantly vanished, and I do not wonder at it.

* *

This yarn I read in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1774. The writer, who did not sign his name, says that the tale is well vouched for, but gives no authority. He adds that a coroner's jury sat on the body of the deceased and found that he had been strangled, by whom, or why, did not appear. I think Beminster or Beaminster is in Dorset, and if any native of the town knows of any record of this affair he will greatly oblige by communicating with me. The Parish Register may give the boy's death at least; his name I forget, but think it is in the story. The one part of the legend which I feel to be thoroughly trustworthy is the conduct of the half-brother; that, at least, is well invented. Puzzle, to find what Sentimental Tommy would have done in the extraordinary circumstances.

* *

The melancholy news of Mr. Max Müller's death arrived after these notes were in print. Much has been written about this distinguished scholar, and, did space serve, I would add my own slight tribute to his memory. It was my fortune to engage for many years in a polemic against Mr. Max Müller's ideas, on a single point—the origin of myths about gods and heroes. My arguments may often have been urged in a sportive and irritating style. It may therefore be right to express here my sense of the unexampled good-humour, humour, and kindness with which Mr. Max Müller met me and my 'oppositions of science,' perhaps 'falsely so called.' Had I been an enthusiastic disciple, instead of

a pertinacious adversary, he could not have been kinder and more genial. His was an example very rare among scholars, who commonly are a race almost as irritable as poets. Others are better qualified to appreciate Mr. Max Müller's vast and original learning, and his invaluable services to Oriental studies and the Theory of Language. On the point in which we did not agree he helped to introduce a stricter and more sceptical method in the interrogation of evidence. But it is to his unique qualities as a man that I would give my testimony.

ANDREW LANG.

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